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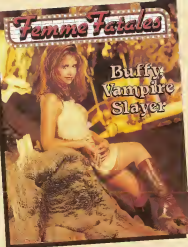
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Reminiscences

## THE AVENGERS M. APPEAL

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# LOST WORLD

SEE JAYNE (HEITMEYER) GO JURASSIC IN A NEW PREHISTORIC POTBOILER.

BY MITCH PARRY

"Lunch" is served early on the set of *SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE'S THE LOST WORLD*. It's 10 p.m. and the crew has assembled in a long, narrow trailer for a chicken or pasta repast. The break is deserved: cast and crew know they've got a long night ahead of them. In fact, it's likely they'll be working until dawn.

Jayne Heitmeyer, the leading lady, is in the wardrobe and makeup trailer screaming a Robert DeNiro video. "I enjoy science fiction, but not exclusively. I have more eclectic tastes," she says, her green eyes fastened on a pile of Brian De Palma and Martin Scorsese videos strewn across an adjacent table.

For an actress whose career is still in its embryonic stage, Heitmeyer has already developed a resume as varied as her taste in films. After studying drama at the Montreal Actor's Lab, she made the transition to radio, doing commercials and functioning as an on-air reporter. Heitmeyer made her film debut in *COVOTE*, a 1992 French-language film starring Quebecois singer, Mitsou. The following year, she performed a bit part in a TV movie and was featured in an episode of *ARE YOU AFRAID OF THE DARK?*, a horror series tailored for tykes.

Heitmeyer finally gar-

nered a plum role, as tough cop Jessy Jaworaki, in the Emmy-nominated *SIRENS*. Broadcast in no less than 40 countries, the series substantively expanded Heitmeyer's visibility. Subsequently paired with Matt Frewer, she earned accolades in the disturbing *First Anniversary* episode of *THE OUTER LIMITS*. Other guest appearances included a gag on *FIX THE SERIES*.

Shifting into another medium, the actress notes, "It's been amazing. Film is much faster, while in TV roles you're locked into a character." During the past two years, Heitmeyer has tallied a myriad of movie credits, including *HAWK'S VENGEANCE*, *PRIMAL SCREAM* (a.k.a. *TWISTS OF TERROR*) and *FACE THE EVIL*, the latter a shoot-'em-up with Shannon Tweed and Lance Henriksen.

Initially cast in *SUSPICIOUS MINDS*, Bergin & Heitmeyer resailed in *LOST WORLD*. The film is co-written by Jean LaFauce, who was the editor & unit director on *RABBIT* (1977).



Cast in *OUTER LIMITS'* *First Anniversary* episode on a deceptive "perfect woman," Heitmeyer shifts into her alter ego.

Danny Roemer, who later produced the Canadian *LOST WORLD*, cast Heitmeyer opposite "Rowdy" Roddy Piper (*HELL COMES TO FROGTOWN*) in *SCI-FIGHTERS*. *THE LOST WORLD* also afforded the actress a reunion with Patrick Bergin (1993's *FRANKENSTEIN*) with whom she previously co-starred in *SUSPICIOUS MINDS*, a movie which offered Heitmeyer the opportunity to play a bona fide femme fatale. "It's more comfortable in the sense that you already know each other," smiles the actress regarding her on-screen rapport with Bergin.

Cast in *THE LOST WORLD* as anthropologist Amanda, her overt sex appeal is more subdued. But Heitmeyer is elated with the character's chutzpa, which draws upon her athletic skills (e.g. horseback riding and skiing) and training in firearms.

It's almost time for the crew to return to the set. Heitmeyer sweeps her blonde hair—fashionably styled à la 1934—away from her eyes. It's doubtful her wardrobe, a tweed jacket and light podhunks, will provide her much protection against the bitter cold. But Jayne Heitmeyer is, after all, a pro. □



SEED on Broadway and in the movie," says the director. "THE MOMMY'S DAY interview covers the exploitation movies she was in, such as THE MINI-SKIRT MOB, and the movies she did for Roger Corman." The special edition will concurrently debut in early May with Collins' paperback adaptation of MOMMY'S DAY for Leisure Books.

●Shannon Wharry (32), the former erotic thriller diva who plays "Velda" on MIKE HAMMER: PRIVATE EYE, a partner with Little Diddy. In addition to Wharry, the band's quartet includes sultry shoot-'em-up siren Alexander Keith (36-7), actor/producer/director Richard Gabler and producer/FF contributor An Bass. Los Angeles residents are encouraged to sample the moto/dieo drama at Sunset Boulevard's Coconut Theater.

●Had the distinct pleasure of viewing Spectrum Films' STARVED, a gut-wrenching tale of psychological terror. Written and directed by Yvette Hoffman and Guy Crawford, this is one of the most gripping independent films I've seen this year. Based on a true story, STARVED is a very dark character study of a young woman who is kidnapped, tortured, and starved to death over a period of four months by a serial killer. Says Ms. Hoffman, "My family was exterminated by the Nazis during the Holocaust, so the subject of starvation is very tender to me. The film takes you through the 110 days in which this girl was starved. Because of the fact that she died at the end, we had a lot of problems getting distribution. Everybody wanted to see her live but the truth is, had that happened, her life would have never been the same again. So, in a way, having her die was the right thing to do. This movie stays with you when it's over." The victim is portrayed, with startling credibility, by Lee Anne Beaman, who appears increasingly more emaciated as the film progresses. Amazingly, Ms. Beaman's past track record leaned on erotic thrillers (e.g. TAINTED LOVE, IRRESISTIBLE IMPULSE, etc.), where the only professional obligation was to perform as a clothes dispenser. But not anymore. "I went to the Simon Wiesenthal Museum of Tolerance to research starvation in preparation for this role," recounts Beaman. "I attended lectures and viewed the documentation on the Holocaust victims. It was really

Atkins literally turn up the heat in Kevin Tenney's SECOND ARRIVAL. The cast: Jane Sibbett (Roxanne Isakson co-writer on FRIENDS) and Patrick Muldoon



Psychological terror is a result of her extremely credible performance in STARVED. Lee Anne Beaman is liberated from her T&A stereotype. "Gut-wrenching, one of the most gripping independent films I've seen this year."

upsetting. It was an emotionally difficult role for me to play. I lost only six or eight pounds, but it didn't take much for me to look gaunt, with my eyes sunken in and my cheek bones jutting out. After I read the script, I had a very strong reaction—I felt cold chills and wheezing in my stomach. Throughout the ages, men have done these awful things to women. The story is so horrendous: I felt shocked and touched. What a challenge to play this role. I felt honored to do it." Adds Hoffman, "Lee Anne was unbelievable. Unbelievable. I couldn't imagine anybody else in the role. Guy was a cameraman on a Playboy shoot that Lee Anne was in. There was just something about her that impressed him. He remembered her when we were shooting STARVED. We looked at her other feature films and, although they're hokey because they're T&A, there was just something about her—we just kind of knew she could pull it off. She's a very talented actress and she takes her craft very seriously." STARVED premieres in video stores no later than in July. Do yourself a favor and rent it.

●Recently viewed Dead Alive Productions' peek-up, EVIL SISTER. Kim Farina, the embodiment of Jessica Rabbit, plays a "reformed" mental patient who's a practitioner of sorcery. Shot on video for an ultra-low budget, this flick breathes the antisepticism of a mediocre high school production. Frankly, it's amazed I ever found a distributor. Farina, the lucky one redemption grace (at least she's shiny on the eye),

previously appeared as a dancer in SHOW-GIRLS and was cast in TV's EROTIC CONFESSIONS ("At the Tone") episode. "To be honest with you, I didn't think EVIL SISTER was going to be sold," sighs the actress. "I just did it for love and for the exposure, but I didn't really think it was going to go anywhere." Mine's going into the trash. Hope to see Farina doing something more worthwhile in the future.

●Kevin Tenney, who directed NIGHT OF THE DEMONS and WITCHBOARD, has expelled finishing touches to THE SECOND ARRIVAL, a sequel to the '86 sci-fi thriller, THE ARRIVAL. "It's about a covert alien invasion of Earth," says Tenney. "The aliens are already here and they can disguise themselves to look like us. They're basically the ones who are responsible for global warming because they're heat-forming the planet. They don't like the cold, and they're heating it up, so that we'll die off and then the planet will be habitable for them." Charlie Sheen, star of the precursor, does not appear this SECOND time around, though Patrick Muldoon takes over as Sheen's estranged half brother. Jane Sibbett, best known as Roz's lesbian co-writer on FRIENDS, plays a newspaper reporter who pushes Muldoon into action. THE SECOND ARRIVAL is expected to premiere on HBO later this year and will appear on home video shortly thereafter. Tenney is currently casting his next project, a film not to be called either TICK TOCK or CLOCKWORK. He describes it as "BLOOD SIMPLE—with more plot twists."

●Tom LaPine is managing Scopia Pictures' subdivision, Apparition Entertainment. The company's '90 releases include PHASMO-PHOBIA, a literal fear fest with Andy Serkis, who's made the transition from Show Sticks talent to gothic to the L.A. bands with Blue Star. And the same company's POET'S MASQUE offers Jacqueline Lovell (5-7), one of the fantasy on-air's most multi-talented actresses, in a gritty role. Both films are slated in Maryland.

●Reprising the stunning success of the "Bond babe" merchandising—doll replicas of the DR. NO and TOMORROW NEVER DIES heroines in fall/winter '97—Exclusive Toys Productions is producing limited edition (3 3/4") movie action figures of Jill Masterson and Pussy Galore (GOLDENFINGER), Tracy (ON HER MAJESTY'S SECRET SERVICE), Major Alya Anisette (THE SPY WHO LOVED ME), Solitaire (LIVE AND LET DIE), Xenia Onatop (GOLDENEYE) & Largo and Domino (THUNDERBOLTS).

●Check-out the Bette Page/Sunny Weaver 1968 '90 calendar. <http://www.edgy.org>

●Occasional FF contributor Bruce Hallenback has written, directed & produced WAMPYRE, a remake of Carl Dreyer's 1932 classic. WAMPYRE Originally produced for Pinewood Entertainment in 1990, Hallenback's movie has recently been released by GI Independent Cinema. "WAMPYRE is very close to the original in that it's very dramatic, very surreal," says Hallenback. "We shot the whole thing in a reconstructed 19th-century village in upstate New York. Loosely based on Sheridan LaFau's Carmilla, WAMPYRE is the story of a wanderer named David Gray. He goes to a village that's overrun by vampires and helps to rid the town of the problem. It's similar to a Western, but very supernatural." Dreyer, the legendary Danish

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Kim Farina, "Jessica Rabbit in the flesh," is alluring as an **EVIL SISTER**. Proving her Jan Dean, the fetching Farina—who performed as one of the **SNOW GIRLS**—didn't think the heavier film was going anywhere. I just did it for tape & exposure."

# THE AVENGERS

## DIANA RIGG

### ON HER TIMELESS A-PEEL

**PIONEERING THE MOST LIBERATED HEROINE IN THE FANTASY GENRE, RIGG WAS A MATCH FOR THE CHARACTER.**

BY RONALD L. SMITH

There's a "new" Emma Peel at your local movie theater. As David Letterman might put it, "Emma...is...UMA. UMA...is Emma..."

Get over it. Emma Peel is the personal legacy of actress Diana Rigg, who pioneered the jumpsuited heroine in *THE AVENGERS* television series (1966-'68). Currently the hostess of *MASTERPIECE THEATRE*, Rigg performed Peel with pre-feminist panache: she kicked ass, didn't play second fiddle to her male partner and never lost her sex appeal. It's likely her character's name, a fatuous embellishment of British slang ("M [male] appeal"), was influenced by her admission into machismo territory. And she paradoxically played both sides of S&M: the karate dominatrix in black leather and the damsel in bondage.

Off and on-screen, Rigg—a '60s icon—was the advent to the liberated woman. She



Diana Rigg and Patrick Macnee as *THE AVENGERS*. The Brit series debuted in the U.S. March 28, 1966, "with the classic sci-fi episode, *THE CYBERNAUTS*."

was the first multimedia actress to do nude scenes on-stage. Always the provocateur, Rigg—adamantly opposed to marriage—risked scandal by hearing a child out of wedlock. Her appeal (no pun intended) crossed over into both sexes, but Rigg's self-description was far from flattering: "The shoulders are extremely wide and very square, and the breasts don't compensate for this width. The hips are too wide. The arms and wrists are slender, but the knees and the calves are over-developed. The jaw is much, much too strong and the mouth is too small."

Born Erida Diana Elizabeth Rigg (July 20, 1938) in Doncaster, England, she later moved with her family to Jodhpur, India. Rigg's father, a civil engineer, cautioned her to avoid the encompassing poverty of the environment ("Never play with stray dogs—they're probably rabid.")

By the time she turned eight, Rigg united with her





**THE AVENGERS:** Rigg's feminist fueled her portrayal of Emma Peel. But she wasn't the first choice for the role. Elizabeth Shephard (**TONI G** OF **LOSER**), a blonde actress initially cast as Mrs. Peel, complained on episode 6 a half before being replaced by Rigg.



"[Rigg, A, in signature logs] behaved she had only 2 friends on the set: [Hester] (B) and the driver who took her to the set."



grandparents in Yorkshire and attended St. Christopher's, a boarding school in Great Missenden (Buckinghamshire). Three years later, her parents returned from India and enrolled their daughter in the equally restrictive Fulneck Girls' School (Pudsey). "We were never allowed to talk to boys," Rigg recalled. "It was so strict that you even had to wear your hair according to orders. It had to be a precise length. Then they used to inspect our gym slips, which had to be exactly two inches above the knee when we were kneeling down."

As a teen, she resisted being locked into a disciplinary tract and was constantly in trouble with school authorities. "But I was tall and redheaded. And tall redheads always got caught." Educated at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, Rigg developed "a guiltless approach to relationships outside marriage."

Waitressing and modeling to support herself, she joined the Royal Shakespeare Company in 1959 when it was organized as the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre Company. Playing Cordelia to Paul Scofield's King Lear, Rigg would realize that tragedy could translate into low comedy. Scofield quaffed a daily brew that consisted

of malt, bran, wheat and honey. "As a result, he suffered from flatulence," recounted Rigg with a prim smile. "Odd sounds accompanied his impassioned cries of 'Howl, howl, howl! O, you are men of stances.'" Critics applauded; it was the actors who held their noses. A consummate actress, Rigg—playing dead in

Rigg & Hammer horror vet Peter Cushing in the "Terror of the Cybernauts" episode. Cushing related to FF's editor, "It was difficult being nasty to Diana."



Scotfield's arms—was professionally challenged; she desperately tried to conceal her laughter.

Rigg sampled the TV medium in 1963, appearing in a Brit series titled *SENTIMENTAL AGENT*. Her episode was written by Brian Clemens, who would later develop teleplays for *THE AVENGERS*. Upon wrapping television productions of *The Comedy of Errors*, *Women Beware Women*, and *The Hot House*, Rigg competed with dozens of other actresses for a crack at *THE AVENGERS*. Honor Blackman, cast as pivotal female lead "Cathy Gale," resigned from the series to play *GOLDFINGER*'s Pussy Galore. "We were told to turn up in black trousers and sweaters. We looked like a neo-fascist army," grinned Rigg as she recalled the audition. "I had not seen *THE AVENGERS* when I was cast, but the idea of doing a television series...that was a little wacky and way out, it appealed to me as the perfect antidote."

The show instantly shifted gears when Cathy Gale vacated the series. By the time Emma Peel was introduced as the new partner of dapper John Steed (Patrick Macnee), the wit had sharpened, and all tongues were firmly planted in cheeks. Though *THE AVENGERS* was aesthetically rewarding, Rigg's paycheck was undernourished. "After 12 episodes, she discovered that she was paid less than the cameramen," wrote biographer Jackie Lane. "I made a bit of a stink about it," recalled Rigg. "Any argument about money is ugly, but I felt I was being exploited." She eventually bagged \$700 a week, but didn't collect royalties.

Rigg portrayed one of the medium's few liberated women. Other "hip" heroines suffered from a lack of conviction. The aforementioned Pussy Galore, a karate-chopping helicat, surrendered her independence—and inexplicably, her lesbian lifestyle—to

#### DIANA RIGG

**"Deep down, I have an irreverent spirit. The real difficulty is finding vehicles for the ladies. There aren't very many new parts for us. I don't know why. I think we're fascinating creatures."**



Starlet, Macnee & Rigg. According to Gareth Humphreys, "Often cited as the cinema feature film of *THE AVENGERS* as early as its third season (1963/64)

debonair James Bond. Emma Peel's relationship with Steed was not impervious by his male ego. In one episode, Steed joins Bansack, an intellectual organization whose members include Mrs. Peel, but he's admitted only because she took the IQ test for him!

Emma Peel, in fact, pretty much echoed Rigg's personal convictions: "No man will ever conquer me or make me his slave," the actress insisted. "Nobody owns me, nobody will. I don't yearn for security. Marriage might be fine for many people, but I find its permanence appalling." Sure enough, Rigg shocked conservative quarters by openly living with a very married Philip Saville—and she'd decline to wed Saville even if his estranged wife approved a divorce. The actress, who subscribed to "living together" even before that euphemism became trendy, "just didn't see the necessity of the sacrament."

She was an outspoken feminist who resisted a truce with reporters on both

sides of the Atlantic. Examples the striped jumpuits that served as Rigg's *AVENGERS* wardrobe were marketed as "Emma Peels." When the actress visited the States, a journalist addressed her as "a trendsetter in women's fashions." Rigg snapped back, "Yes, I know. But you Americans still don't admit women to your restaurants who wear trouser suits."

Her liberalism hardly turned off fans, but the fans eventually turned off Diana Rigg. "I must say it was great fun at first being recognized on the street...but I'm really not equipped to be a celebrity. I loathe intrusions on my privacy...and the autograph syndrome is simply beyond my comprehension." She rejected one autograph-seeker by telly admonishing, "It's illegal to sign autographs in the street." Mail from smitten, teenage fans was sometimes dutifully answered: "My daughter is much too old for you," Rigg's mother would respond, "and what you need is a good run around

the block." (*FF* photog Vinne Miani recalls, sometime in the mid-'90s, Rigg "was besieged by a dozen fans or so when she exited a Broadway theater. She vowed to furnish everyone with an autograph—but "only one per person!").

*THE AVENGERS* proved a match for Rigg's anarchic demeanor, though censors weren't amused. Count the double entendres in an exchange between a cat owner's club manager and Steed.

"The name of your beloved pussy?"

"Emma."

"Coloring?"

"Heddish brown."

"Oh! A cuddly tabby...what a joy it must be when she's curled up in your lap."

Mrs. Peel cosily deflected the risqué cajolery, e.g. the tattoo artist who asks the heroine if she'd like to be illustrated with a rosebud tattoo—"one on each," or the shoemaker who proclaimed, "I am at your feet!" and begged her to wear "kinky black leather." Peel registered only a mild gaze of tolerant disdain. Perhaps the most valid summation of Emma Peel was offered by berserk film director Z. Z. Von Schnerk (Kenneth J. Warren) in *Epis*, a 1967 episode written by Brian Clemens: "I needed you, Mrs. Peel, a woman of beauty, of action, a woman who could become desperate and yet remain strong; a woman who could become confused and yet remain intelligent, who could fight back and yet remain feminine. Yes, and only you, Emma Peel, have all these qualifications."

Censorial watchdogs occasionally tried to circumvent the externalization of Emma's sex appeal. Disguised as a harem girl in one episode (*Honey for the Prince*)—replete with slinky veils—her navel was sealed shut, via a tiny glass jewel, in deference to censors. And it kept popping out. Diana Rigg was not pleased. Though the brevity of the costume hardly embellished her non-bosomy physique,

DIANA RIGG

**"No man will ever conquer me and make me his slave. Nobody owns me, nobody will. I don't yearn for security. Marriage is fine for some people, but I find its permanence appalling."**

Rigg's sensuousness was all natural and titillating. She was hot because she was non-artificial.

But no amount of compromise could rescue a 1966 episode, *A Touch of Bravado*, from network tampering. Rigg, as the dominatrix, Queen of Sin, was squeezed into an abbreviated, bean-constrictive bustier. A spiked choker collar, garish eye makeup, thigh-high leather boots and whip completed the kinky ensemble. According to *AVENGERS* archivist James Dowe, "The costume was suggested and designed by Diana Rigg, herself." Notes writer Gareth Humphreys, "To dispel one myth, the episode was never banned in Britain, though it was edited for transmission. America's ABC network, however, decided not to screen the episode during its first run."

Twice nominated for Emmys ('67 and '68), Rigg lost—both times—to Barbara Bain (*MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE*). The aforementioned Jackie Lane, noted that the actress "wasn't happy with the way she was treated [by ABC, the U.S. broadcasters]." Furthermore, "[series co-star Patrick] Macnee found out much later that Rigg believed she only had two friends on the set: him, and the driver who took her to the studio every morning."

Rigg departed from *THE AVENGERS* series in *The Forget-Me-Knot* episode which introduced Linda Thorson as her replacement. Thorson played her heroine, "Tara King," as a more provincial baby-faced, doe-eyed damsel who was often a burden on Steed. Comparisons with Rigg's Emma Peel weren't flattering. Furthermore, ABC dropped the show in the same time slot as NBC's unvanquished *LAUGH IN*. Ratings instantly declined and the Steed/King duo survived only one season. Seven years later, Macnee reprised his role as Steed in *THE NEW AVENGERS*, but the series, which cast Joanna Lumley



Rigg's most unlikely role: a house girl in the episode, *Money for the Prince*. A jewel, which kept popping out, was lodged in her navel to mollify censors.

as Steed's niece, was also cancelled after only a single season (1976/77). Lumley subsequently earned celebrity as the dysfunctional "Patsy Stone" on the British sitcom, *ABSOLUTELY FABULOUS* (1992/96).

Rigg pursued a film career that she'd loiter gaudy as "a checked record, to put it baldly," Graham Rye, a chronicler of the James Bond movies, describes Rigg "a seasoned actress who was

a good choice to play 007's leading lady in *ON HER MAJESTY'S SECRET SERVICE* (1969). Her portrayal of Tracy as Bond's equal brought a freshness and vitality to the part that was seldom equaled by other Bond girls, and it is probably her best screen performance. Her other excursions into film have been limited and mostly unmemorable." Rigg's impassioned, on-screen rapport with 007

(George Lazenby) is, indeed, demonstrative of a sterling performance: off-screen, the couple loathed one another. Lazenby dismissed the production as "hell" and revealed that Rigg deliberately ate garlic before love scenes. The actress fumed over her co-star's inflated ego and crude demands for preferential treatment. She would have turned down the role to exercise another option—the lead in *PAINT YOUR WAGON*—but her father's illness prompted her to reject the musical.

Though she was often better than her vehicles, Rigg's track record includes three very underrated movies: *THE ASSASSINATION BUREAU* (68), *THE HOSPITAL* (1971) and, most especially, *THEATRE OF BLOOD* (73), the latter a Grand Guignol comedy that required Rigg to partially play her role, as Vincent Price's demented daughter, in drag.

By June 1970, Rigg returned to the theater for a retelling of Aeford and Heloise. A pivotal though brief nude scene, performed in semi-darkness, incited the press to catch a peek at undressed rehearsals. Rigg was repulsed by the furor, what with reporters behaving like voyeurs. "All the press in London were down on us, most of them without having seen the play," recalled the actress. "How had already been in London with its nude scene but no one knew these kids and no one minded them undressed." Newspapers, however, countered that the controversy was warranted because it was "the first time in theatre history that two major actors [Rigg and Keith Mitchell] performed in the buff on stage." Rigg's protests were jeered by scribes who trivialized the play as "Emma un-Peeled."

Though her outbursts were laced with self-dengrating humor, Rigg's protests only antagonized the press. "I see no point in being defensive about eroticism. I think it's rather good

to have it. But if people come to see me as a sex symbol, then they'll have enormous problems confronted with me. I have to make up my backside—otherwise, when I show it onstage, it looks like a piece of old cod."

She later recalled the incident on Dick Cavett's gabfest. "My body is no different from anybody else's. In fact, I remember one letter that said, 'I don't know why you bother. My girlfriend's tits are much larger than yours.' You see? But everybody who steps onstage has to have the definitive figure. But in the play, a definitive figure is neither here nor there—you're playing a character."

"You're fully dressed until the wings. Then you drop your knickers. That's easy. Stepping onstage without your knickers is the most difficult thing in the world. I promise you, it is—if you've ever done it, it's against everything you've ever been taught. And the draft is incredible.... The press was there from all nations, peering as if I had another breast and [Mitchell] had two penises."

The reviewers finally vindicated Rigg. *The Times* of London bowed to her beauty ("She looks handsome, she always does when that auburn mane tumbles over her shoulders") and performance ("It was gritty [and] aggressive, daring the house to laugh at lines which from the mouth of a less assured actress would have provoked schoolboyish titters").

Premiering in America during March '71, the play experienced a chronic case of *deja vu*, with a leering press. Critic John Simon speculated if the nudity was necessary. ("Diana Rigg is built like a brick mauseoleum with insufficient flying buttresses.") But *New York Times* reviewer Clive Barnes described the controversial three minutes as "the most tasteful, tactful and apposite nude love scene I have ever encountered. As a matter of record, I suppose Miss Rigg and Mr.



Rigg as the Queen of Siss in *A Touch of Straws*. Five episodes of the provocative blow-up scene were recently censored.

Mitchell are the first major stars to appear naked on the Broadway stage, but... the scene is neither prurient nor distasteful. Diana Rigg is perfect: as sensuous as a cat, with hidden fires beneath the surface."

Rigg earned a Tony nomination for her role. One year later, she thumbed her nose at detractors by performing a nude scene in another play, *Jumpers*. She subsequently rekindled her ties with Shakespeare by play-

ing Lady Macbeth opposite Anthony Hopkins' Macbeth. She lost the negative press, but not her sense of humor. Actor Denis Quilley was required to slip his hand inside her bodice. Rigg unnerved Quilley by mischievously whispering, "Up a bit...left a bit, down a bit...golden shot!"

As a member of Sir Laurence Olivier's National Theater Company, the actress was affectionately christened "Tita" Rigg by

Mr. Olivier. It seems she habitually refused to wear a bra.

The next time Americans glimpsed Rigg, she was posing for *TV Guide* in little more than a red slip. The caption: "*Avenger* tries on a TV role, not to mention a skimpy dress." The Shakespearean actress was contracted to play the title role in *DIANA*, a U.S. sitcom that debuted in 1973. "After two years at the National Theater I was heavily in debt to

my bank," shrugged Rigg. She described her series character as "probably the first divorcee on television... she's very sophisticated, in her thirties, with lots of boyfriends. And she's not touched by human hands."

But a renegade woman and prime time TV were as compatible as vermouth and a six-pack of Hamm's Beer. Peering for a cover shoot, she abruptly struck a pose, quipping: "How does that grab you? A crotch shot? How about a bum shot?" And, with good-natured pique, she queried, "How does *Los Angeles* magazine feel about nipples? I am not wearing a bra and this sweater's a bit thin. NBC doesn't like nipples at all, or navels, or any manifestation of humanity."

As Diana Smythe, fashion coordinator, her apartment was invaded by a zany cast of co-workers. Critics branded the series a pale imitation of *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*. "After filming the second episode," concurred Rigg, "I knew it was going to be garbage. I had never known such failure on such a grand scale... if you embrace failure, it's rather less painful. That's one of the best lessons I've ever learned!" The show's longevity was limited to 30 episodes.

Nevertheless, she resisted roles that leaned entirely on sexual humor: "I couldn't live the life of some plastic movie queen or sex symbol. Whatever happens, I won't fall into that trap. I've always done the most ridiculous, extreme things. Whatever I do, it's because my appetite is right for it... I like to get some enjoyment out of what I'm doing. I need antidotes to relieve boredom. It appeals to me to be erratic. I think it's unfortunate that they, the critics, the audience and sometimes other actors, insist that you be consistent."

She returned to England for several stage triumphs, including *Pygmalion* and *Antony and Cleopatra*. Rigg became acquainted with

#### DIANA RIGG

**"I see no point in being defensive about eroticism. I think it's rather good to have. But if people come to see me as a sex symbol, they'll have enormous problems confronted with me."**



Patrick Monro: "I certainly did not have an affair with [Rigg], but I do love her very much. We had a remarkable partnership, it was a professional marriage in a way. It only lasted for 18 months, but it was very successful and very good."

Menahem Gueffen, an artist and member of the Israeli Palmach army, at a party. Their relationship, launched in '73, was fraught with turbulence. "We were in a hotel six floors up," recalled Rigg. "I told him I was leaving. He said, 'Fine. I'll help you pack.' He did. Then he picked up my suitcase, and all my clothes, and threw them out the window. I was amazed. I seriously felt I'd met my match."

Menahem recounted the incident as a turning point: "She became very calm, very quiet... and very obedient." And they married. "We quarreled all the time. To her, not quarreling was not relating."

The couple separated in '74. Rigg spirited herself to Broadway for *The Moonstruck*. "To go on loving for me is to go on learning—learning about life and everything that makes life. Wanting to go on learning makes one vulnerable, of course. You are always exposing yourself to risk. I hope I can take it."

Cast as bitchy, sexy Ce-

limene, the actress instructed her costume designer the character should "be wearing golden browns and creams, never any underwear. Her body has to be evident, fluid—nothing stiff to imprison her personality."

Offstage, Rigg explained her love theories to writer Lawrence B. Eisenberg: "I refuse to say 'I love you' in order to legitimize the fact that I've been to bed with a fellow. I don't expect him to say it to me, either. Sex is wild improvisation and shouldn't be taken too seriously at the beginning. It is, after all, only one way of communicating—a very enjoyable one at its best—but then you get to a much deeper communication, which is not necessarily commitment, but just the trust of being together continuously. The sex act is the funnest thing on the face of this earth."

Her sensuousness and wit had not at all eroded: Rigg was proclaimed by one gay club as "the woman we would most want to turn straight for." And she was

content to have eluded the sex kitten stereotype: "If you are an actress, you're expected to be... stupid, vain. Well, we are intelligent. The nature of our work demands it. I'm not exactly all teeth and tits, am I?"

Later in '74, Rigg posed for a London tabloid in a nostalgic reprisal of Marilyn Monroe's skirt lifted by an amphy breeze: "Ever since I was a young girl, I knew I would reach my peak at around age 35. Well, I'm 36, and unlike so many other women, glad to admit my age..." She vowed to grow into "a sexy, crazy old lady."

Her next love was ex-Scotts Guard Archie Stirling. They didn't marry, nevertheless, 38-year-old Rigg gave birth to daughter Rachel Atlanta (May 30, 1978). "I had worked solidly for 18 years and, by that time, I had become aware that the career just wasn't going to be enough. Pregnancy, and all that came with it, was enjoyable, relaxing. The comparative quiet in one's life that follows having a baby."

In 1981, the *Daily Mail*—reviewing Rigg's transference of *Hedda Gabler* to the TV medium—remembered John Simon's unkind review from a decade ago: "There is nothing remotely brick masonelish about her, and actresses are well hidden by Victorian criminals." One year later, Rigg and Stirling turned up in New York and asked a Manhattan city clerk to marry them in a quick ceremony ("We got married to liven up a dull Thursday"). The couple split in 1990.

Further distancing herself from Emma Peel, the actress played variable stage roles in the likes of *Heartbreak House* (1983), *Black House* (1985) and *Follies* (1986). In 1988, Rigg received a CBE (Commander of the Order of the British Empire) from Queen Elizabeth II.

During the '90s, a new generation of TV viewers became acquainted with Rigg

continued on page 40



**T:** On-screen, Hagg "personified the new, liberated woman." Off-screen, she was "blunt & outspoken" & "She is a great actress, and we're still very good friends," says Patrick Macnee.



# UMA THURMAN EMMA PEEL

LOCKED INTO LEATHER FOR THE MOVIE ADAPTATION, SHE  
DISCUSSES PEEL'S PANACHE & CO-STAR SEAN CONNERY.

BY FREDERICK C. SZERN

It was Mrs. Catherine Gale, PhD (Honor Blackman) who was initially paired with John Steed (Patrick Macnee) in those black & white, videotaped episodes of *THE AVENGERS*. "She was supposed to be a mixture of anthropologist Margaret Mead and



Thurman (5) slipped-on leather as one half of *THE AVENGERS* (5). "Ralph Fiennes is perfect as John Steed."



*Life* magazine photographer Margaret Bourke White—a thinking woman with a lot of action," recalls Macnee. But when the series was purchased by the ABC network for U.S. broadcast, Mrs. Gale was written out of the series—Blackman opted for a movie career—and Americans were introduced to her substitute, an equally liberated heroine named Emma Peel (Diana Rigg). "THE AVENGERS gave me a sexy image, all black leather and crotch," recounts Rigg. So confident that the curvy crusader would draw ratings, ABC purchased 26 black & white filmed episodes and co-financed another 26 episodes shot in color. Some of scripts, tailored for Cathy Gale, were remade or reworked for Rigg's character.

Now, 30 years after Mrs. Peel bid adieu to Steed, *THE AVENGERS* has moved from cult TV show to major motion picture. The series' most indelible icons—the leather-clad Peel and Steed, the latter brandishing a derby and comb sword/cane—survived the transition, intact. Uma Thurman, a come-stealer in *PULP FICTION* and one of the very few reasons to sit through





Here, Peel (Thurman), wearing a suit her father, battles her evil clone. H. Rylands Design's design of Peel's hat shows its fashion-like, even knockoff London ("Production design will be a major star of the movie.") & filmed scene.

BATMAN AND ROBIN, was cast as Emma Peel, "metabolologist-weather specialist-animal-matter fusion/fusion/martial arts expert." The competition for the role proved quite formidable, with contenders like Elisabeth Shue, Nicole Kidman and Emma Thompson. Two years ago, the rumor mill resolutely locked Gwyneth Paltrow into the plum part.

In her \$60 million big screen incarnation, Mrs. Peel is suspected of a crime she did not commit. She's assigned to solve the mystery with the help of agent extraordinaire, John Steed (Ralph Fiennes). Turning in to a secret agent by necessity, Peel not only validates her innocence but beefs-up Steed's opposition to Sir August de Winter (Sean Connery), it seems diabolic de Winter, who can convert the climate into an apocalyptic weapon, is so obsessed with the comely avenger that he

cloned an evil twin of Mrs. Peel.

Thurman, who watched the series as a child, said she "always wanted to work with Ralph [Fiennes]," who beat out Sean Bean, Robin Coltrane and Alan Rickman for the coveted role. "I had the privilege of meeting him before, and I admire his work a lot. I'd read a version of the script several years before, which [producer] Jerry Weintraub had sent me. When it came back around, it just seemed like it was coming back to me for a reason. Ralph was in it, I thought he was perfect for the part, and it's a really good female character, she's positive and intelligent and witty. In a way, she's sort of a superwoman with a tongue-in-cheek twist. Just very charming. I thought this would be an interesting, different style of movie for me, so I thought I would just take a whack at it."





**F** Evoking the original TV series, Thurman models one of Anthony Powell's costumes. **F** Seduced by suave Sam Cornery

Thurman declines to compare Poison Ivy, the literal *femme fatale* whom she portrayed in *BATMAN AND ROBIN*, with her spin on Emma Peel. "I think, as a parallel, there are some things in common between Emma Peel and Poison Ivy. They're both very strong characters, and colorful in very different ways. Emma Peel is far more subtle and

delicate, and not nearly the vaudevillian fanatic that Poison Ivy is. They've nothing in common in the nature of the characters, or even really in the style of playing them, but there are similarities between the films only because they're both very design-heavy with specially costumes that are both challenging to wear. In a way, *BATMAN AND ROBIN* was

a good initiation to do a movie like this because it's been a while since I have had to suit up [*laughs*], in various forms of rubber or leather."

The wardrobe notwithstanding, Thurman notes the real challenge "was how to reinvent what is remembered from the TV show. Nobody wanted to shy away from that. In regard to how

I saw the character and her costume, it was incredibly economical and simple and effortless—the total opposite of Poison Ivy, who was naturally the way she was in whatever costume she was in. [Emma Peel] wasn't a woman who worked her looks or made intentional use of her sexuality, not at all. She was just a very free spirit."

**B** Synthesizer Composer's pre-production *Avengerized*. **R** Designer Stuart Craig's realization: Thurman "It's a new superhero outfit. High-tech, full of dypene."



Though inevitably described by reviewers as "sexy," Thurman has actively resisted stereotype. She was an imprisoned, bomb-heaving earth mother in HENRY & JUNE, a virginal convent girl in DANGEROUS LIAISONS, a vulnerable gangster's moll in MAD DOG AND GLOVE, Fantine in LES MISERABLES and all-thumbs in EVEN COW-GIRLS GET THE BLUES. "I do always try to experience different genres of film," she concurs, "—different styles of working, different ways of approaching the work and learning more on every film. In THE AVENGERS, a very delicate touch was used in the interaction between Emma and Steed to get underneath them. But everything is kept light, and that's often harder to do than being able to hit something as hard as you want. I mean, things fall apart if you were trying to work the meaning of anything too much. The film combines light comedy and a swift wit."

"Emma and Steed have this great rapport with the movie environment; acting very natural, they take these extraordinary surroundings for granted. The designs in THE AVENGERS are extraordinary and massive. It's one of the most beautifully designed movies I've ever been on, if not the most beautifully designed. I can only imagine that the design will be a major star of the movie, equal to the characters or not, but you never know until you see the end product. The success of any film depends on how it's cut. If you got lost in the movie, you're probably lost in your role. But it's not really something you can pre-empt; you just have to do your job, same as ever."

The movie, not unlike the TV series, has envisioned London as "a mod, futuristic, '60s-influenced world that's linked with a very elegant modernism. So we're sometime ahead, yet somewhere behind. It's meant to be a mysterious, escapist kind of experience."

#### UNA THURMAN

**"The challenge was to reinvent what is remembered from the TV show. Mrs. Peel is intelligent, witty. It's an action film in a non-malicious way; it's not really a love story, it's a buddy movie."**



"Emma Peel is a really good female character," says Thurman. "She's positive and witty. In a way, she's sort of superwoman with a tongue-in-cheek twist."

"Some things always come back in style. You remember in the '70s and '80s everyone was like, 'Oh, that disgusting '60s architecture, and those terrible bell bottoms.' The same harms were levelled at '70s culture and the '80s. No one would be caught dead wearing the styles of the past two decades. But I've noticed that in the '90s all that stuff has come back as nostalgic time pieces—and the style has been thoroughly appreciated again. So, in a way, the movie sort reflects this period where time has come full circle."

Last year, *The Sun*, a

British newspaper, reported that Sean Connery "wanted his character to have a shot at seducing Mrs. Peel. Word from the production is that Connery's changes were incorporated into the storyline, but only after Uma Thurman looked at the changes and approved them." Though Thurman plays dual roles—Emma Peel and her soulless, cloned replacement—rumors surfaced, by Spring '98, that Connery was stealing the picture. But Thurman is gracious, and not at all intimidated. "I never imagined I'd get to work with him. I was really

thrilled when I heard Sean Connery was going to do the movie. I've never seen him really play a villain. [According to Reuters, "Connery hasn't played a heavy in a film since 1957."] His villain was incredibly charming and seductive. But I didn't really know he was a villain the entire time, which is perhaps more insidious than anything else! And he has an extraordinary ability to carry off some very silly costumes. We all had to do that! But Sean has big shoulders—I think he can embody or express whatever he likes. He's such a massive personality, and has so much energy and incredible charm, he could



probably wear a black garbage bag and carry it off."

Thurman summarizes THE AVENGERS movie as "a witty, very original looking and feeling film. That's why I did it, because it was something that I'd never really seen before. It's an action movie in a non-malicious way—and it's a romantic comedy in a very charming and elegant way. It's not really a love story, it's a buddy movie. But most of all, it has a very delicate sensibility and an unusual sense of humor so, hopefully, it will be quite special." □

# THE AVENGERS

## M. APPEAL

**BRIAN CLEMENS, THE SERIES' PRODUCER/WRITER, RECALLS THE FEMMES WHO PARTNERED WITH JOHN STEED.**

By JAMES MURRAY

As both a producer/writer for *THE AVENGERS* and *THE NEW AVENGERS*, Brian Clemens tailored episodes for the franchise's female legacy. I suspected Emma Peel was a shoe-in as his fave. I was wrong. Anyway, Clemens opted to open our chat with—

*The differences:*

"Cathy Gale, in the persona of Honor Blackman (1961-'64) who's the one I fancied most, was the toughest. She had to be, she was breaking new ground as a strong female character who had to compete in male territory—without losing her femininity.

"Emma Peel [played by Diana Rigg, 1966-'68] had it a little easier since that type of role had already been established. She just had to carry on but in her own mode, which was with a lighter touch—almost tongue-in-cheek.

"Tara King? Well, I didn't cast Linda [Thorson, 1968-'69] for the role, having been fired at the time! Nor would I have for two reasons. First, she had no experience to fall back on, she was too young—not in years, but in



Cost as John Steed's sidekick in the first season of *THE AVENGERS* ('66-'68), Linda Thorson is active in the Canadian TV series, *SMILEY OF NEW MOON* ('84)

living. Second, she was Canadian, so she did not properly appreciate the peculiar British sense of humour that permeated the series. I got around this, though not entirely successfully, by making a virtue of her naivete—giving her a kind of lovable new puppy persona. I also created Mother (Patrick Newell) to bring in some much needed humour, mostly between him and Steed.

"Purdey [played by Joanna Lumley in *THE NEW AVENGERS*, 1976] was easier still. It was a different age where women could put their bras back on again, secure in their new-found power. Jo Lumley is a very stylish person and she has an almost male sense of humour—a genuine wit. It was a pleasure to write for her, knowing she would not only understand the joke but actually *plus up* on it."

*What about the story behind Emma Peel's name?*

"Emma Peel was created by the late Marie Donakson, a publicist on the show. *M. Appeal*, *Man Appeal*. I thought it a bit hokey, but liked the name, so we used it."

*Why didn't Elizabeth Shepherd work out as the*



T. Darrin Rigg in *A Touch of Brimstone*. ABC decided to televise the episode during its first run. R. Rigg ("Emma Peel") & Patrick Stewart ("John Steed")



## BRIAN CLEMENS

**"The Emma Peel series was Bob Hope & Bing Crosby, with Crosby/Steed always coming Hope/Peel into wrestling the alligator: a time honored formula that's worked since Laurel & Hardy."**

### *First Mrs. Peel?*

"Liz Shepherd, a good actress, just had no sense of humour, nor did she have much grounding in *THE AVENGERS*. I am not even sure that she had seen any episodes before she was cast. She was tough, beautiful, dour. She might have been Sigourney Weaver!"

### *And Diana Rigg?*

"Diana had that great sense of spoofy humour. Maybe she never quite took it seriously which was okay, because the viewers were not supposed to either."

*And what other elements made those Emma Peel episodes into "classic" AVENGERS?*

"Steed [Patrick Macnee] was at his youthful peak then. As the series wore on, so did he, and that didn't help. Secretly though, I think it is because Diana was the partner he really lit it off with, and it shows. All our best shows were contained in the Emma Peel series, although, arguably, some of the best scripts were in the Tara King/Purdey episodes. I think *Dead Men are Dangerous* was one of my best—ranking with *Joker* and *Blow* that Jack Bull—but everyone has their favorites."

### *Any thoughts about the Steed/Mrs. Peel team?*

"The Peel series was not, per se, *Brandy* and the *Beast*, but rather, for me, Bob Hope and Bing Crosby—with Crosby/Steed always coming Hope/Peel in to wrestling the alligator, it's a time honored formula and has been working since Laurel and Hardy."

### *What about the sexual tension in the series?*

"I always thought that the Cathy Gale/Emma Peel relationships had the ten-

sion of *They Have*. Will they do it again?" I always imagined that they had been to bed together, had a terrific time and then, though not over, they were kept together by their work. With all the sexual tensions dispensed, they were able to relax into it more."

*Any speculation as to why the producers settled on Emma Peel for the AVENGERS movie?*

"I think it is a case of first seen; the Peel episodes were the first seen really worldwide and especially in the States. They were like a

Henry Kluckhohn, cast as Cathy Gale, is the female whom *AVENGERS* producer Brian Clemens "hooked most."



# STEED ON M. APPEAL

**PATRICK MACNEE ON HIS FOUR AVENGING ALLIES: THEN & NOW.**

BY JAMES MURRAY



Patrick Macnee (l) gauges ferocity on star Honor Blackman as "one of the most beautiful women in the world." Producer Brian Clemens notes "she broke new ground—Honor had to compete in male territory without losing her femininity."

Recounting his role as John Steed on eight seasons of *THE AVENGERS* (and one season of *THE NEW AVENGERS*), Patrick Macnee speaks with greatest affection, and respect, about his former female colleagues. He interprets the "star quality" sustained by the series' matriarchy:

"You always find that stars are people who take terrific risks in their own life. All those women I acted with, they could have been great admirals of the fleet or post mistresses, or almost anything else. They just happened to be actresses. But you only become a star—and I was never a star, I was a good leading man—if you are way out. Dame Diana [Rigg], Sir Anthony Hopkins, Sir Elton John."

What fellows are comments gleaned from our lengthy conversation about *THE AVENGERS*.

**Honor Blackman ("Mrs. Cathy Gale")**

"Honor Blackman is one of the most beautiful women in the world."

**Diana Rigg ("Mrs. Emma Peel")**

"She's a dame now. She was the Tey, and she's just won the Emmy, so she's one of the most awarded actresses in the business, and certainly one of the most

darling. And I think that [making *THE AVENGERS*] was a period in her life when she was 24, and she created an incredible thing there. But, in anything she does, she's just a superb actress. She and Maggie Smith, and Vanessa Redgrave, I think, rule the world as far as I'm concerned."

"She only spent a couple of years on *THE AVENGERS*. The couple of years just happened to be glamorous—electricity, delight, wonder!—because she's one of the great actresses. She shined on our show like a beautiful butterfly."

**Linda Thorson (as Tara King)**

"They [added the Mother

character] because Linda Thorson was so young that they thought she needed help. She didn't, really, because she was an awfully good actress."

**Joanna Lumley (as Purdey)**

"Most of the time I spent [on the set of *THE NEW AVENGERS*] talking with Jo Lumley, who I adored. God, talk about an intelligent person! She's so bright

and tremendous. She's a great girl and has since become one of the most famous women in Great Britain." (Lumley was the alcoholic, nymphomaniac, partner-in-crime of Eddy in the hit sitcom, *ABSOLUTELY FABULOUS*.)

**Do you stay in contact with them?**

"Honor Blackman, I don't see too much of. Linda Thorson, I see. Di Rigg and Jo Lumley I see whenever I go to England."

**The big question on every viewer's mind is about the sexual tension between the characters. Were Steed's relationships—with Mrs. Gale, Mrs. Peel and Tara—more than just platonic?**

"The people who talk about sex a lot don't do it. We never talked about sex but we did it. We didn't need to talk about it because there were other things to do as well. What was the point of talking about it? You just do it and get on with it." □

Macnee & Joanna Lumley as *THE NEW AVENGERS*. Lumley later earned attention in the *ABSOLUTELY FABULOUS* sitcom. Her '87 film: *PRINCE VALIANT*.



new, fresh, wacky breeze and that sticks in the nostalgic mind."

So how might you have recommended updating *Mrs. Peel for the Nineties*?

"I would not move far away from the original—after all, that is what and why people will be coming to see the movie. Paramount thought that she should be played by a Brit because they can project power and always have. They're comfortable in their role and don't have to become 'quasmen' to achieve it.

"The important thing is that she should not be a hard ball-breaker like so many American actresses these days. She must, despite her awesome powers, be first and foremost a woman, someone we lust to get into the sack with. Not just for her body, but because it would be fun. I am a great fan of Uma Thurman, but whether she can bring this off—the subtle aspects—rather than just be a great body in tight fitting leather... well, it remains to be seen."

Any other thoughts about the new film?

"Thurman looks great in leather, but Fienies looks uncomfortably like Stan Laurel in the bowler. Had I been involved, I would have gotten rid of the bowler and gone back to grass roots. The basis of Macnee's image for Steed was an old and very good movie titled *Q PLANES*, in which Ralph Richardson played a quirky Secret Service man. He carried an umbrella and wore a trilby hat, which suited him and would probably suit Fienies, too.

"I think it is a great pity that, I am told, the movie will not even have the link of Laurie Johnson's music.

"Apart from that, I await the movie with some eagerness and trepidation. At times like these I wish I was a movie critic." □



7: Steed (Macnee) rescues Mrs. Peel (Rugg) in *Peel*, a sequel of *Steed* movies.  
8: The couple convene in *Peel's* flat.  
9: *Peel's* final episode, also briefly meets her substitute, Tara King (Jenna Thomas).







# JILLIAN MCWHIRTER

*on Brian Yuzna's*

# PROGENY

**WOMEN IN SF: REFLECTIONS  
ON A VERY PERSONAL  
INVASION FROM OUTER SPACE.**

By CRAIG REID

E.T., it ain't. Brian Yuzna's latest film, *PROGENY*, draws upon the experiences of authentic alien abductees for its inspiration. More significantly, it seriously speculates the fate of a woman who is impregnated by an extraterrestrial.

Walking around the Delfino sound stage, precariously nestled near the foothills of Sylmar (just east of Hollywood), you are swallowed in darkness. I nearly collided into cellophane-wrapped alien fetuses that were suspended in the nursery. A giant, bloodshot eye—replete with grossly bloated, popping veins—follows me as I stroll to the master bedroom where “sex erupts into a passionless hell.” Within minutes, the set was cleared of “non-essential personnel.” A nude Jillian McWhirter, cast as Sherry Burton, is acclimating herself to the technology developed for her “alien kidnapping.” She laid motionless on a skinny bar that was attached to a telescoping techno-crane. On film, with some optical embellishment, it’ll appear that McWhirter is levitating out of the bedroom window. Flooded with backlights and torched with orange and blue flashes, the yellow walls and pristine white bed sheets bask in the marian glow. I notice Angela Bowen’s hook, *Backstage Passes*, lying next to an old fashioned



**PROGENY** Abducted by aliens (J), McWhirter is turned into a human guinea pig (for JET). “My character’s emotional range is amazing,” says the actress, whose examination by human physicians (center) may be equally arduous. J: It’s makeup effects supervisor/designer Screaming Mad George & McWhirter



PROGENY: McWhorter is experimented upon—and mutated—by aliens. Director Brian Yusem, describes the film as "a ROSEMARY'S BABY-type hybrid with aliens. Jettison did a great job; many girls ran from this part because what happens to the heroine is terrible."

clock on the nightstand. An in-joke? Angela's ex-soul-mate, David Bowie, developed a Ziggy Stardust pseudonym when he invaded as one of the Spiders from Mars; he was also THE MAN WHO FELL TO EARTH.

I bumped into director Brian Yuzna (6'5") whose erotic iconography usually suggests a wet dream shared by H.P. Lovecraft and Hajime Sorayama. Think of Kathleen Kinmont (132) literally coming apart as the BRIDE OF RE-ANIMATOR (originally written for her RE-ANIMATOR's co-star Barbara Crampton), or his nihilistic "Romeo and Juliet" confection, RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD 3 (originally produced as ZOMBIE LOVE). Or his Lith/Lesbian union feminist hybrid, SILENT NIGHT, DEADLY NIGHT 4: THE INITIATION. Or the mutations of SOCIETY, Yuzna's dark allegory about yielding to incestuous, bourgeois indulgences. I was introduced to Ms. McWhirter, a blonde, petite Southern belle who was nonplussed by the sexual predators in the screenplay. Minutes before she returned to the set, McWhirter rattled off some of her film credits—it turns out that she's a youthful veteran of 15 movies, a couple of scope and umpteen stage productions.

The Memphis-born thespian pegged PROGENY as her "most challenging film to date. I heard about the film's story a year ago from one of the producers, Jack Murphy. And he came to watch my theater productions. I really wanted to be a part of this project, the role is so emotional! With the way I look, they want to put me in with these pretty girl parts, but I love playing character roles. I just played a drug addict in a movie (DROP-DEAD) with Mariel Hemingway and Dyan Cannon! But, in this movie, the emotional range is amazing. I play Sherry Burton, wife of Dr. Craig Burton, and she wants a family badly. I put

# BRIAN YUZNA, DIRECTOR

**"She's raped, abducted, vivisected; on top of that, there's nudity. It's a traumatic experience that takes actresses places they dare not go and I don't blame them. Jillian was excellent."**



McWhirter as "Allison, a gynoid" in AFTER MIDNIGHT, an elusive 1985 horror anthology. The actress co-starred with Mary McCormack (7, 2, SPOOKS I & II).

my husband through medical school and so it's my turn to start a family. I got pregnant, which is all I ever wanted. He assumes it is someone else's baby, and I am in total denial even though lots of funny things happen to me. I deteriorate in this film as I fight for this baby. I can identify with the character because when I believe in something, I fight for it."

I queried, "But how could you possibly identify with a woman who is raped and impregnated by an alien?" Dipping into the dressing room, a production assistant beckoned McWhirter to the set. The actress turned to me and giggled, "That's a good one, hold that question."

I strolled to the bedroom set and was again greeted by Yuzna, who was perched in his director's chair. "Jillian is about to fly," he said. "Although she will be floating through the window, she is actually going feet first against a green screen."

"You know, I like this project because it is a ROSE-

MARY'S BABY-type story hybrid with aliens. But it's a ROSEMARY'S BABY from the husband's point of view. There's this feeling of the unknowable in pregnancy, and the idea that things can be happening in our lives that we have no idea about. I find that paranoia type of atmosphere to be tremendously inviting. It's a story about a man who's fighting against all the odds to save his wife from a perceived danger. And it's also a tragic story about the love of a man for his wife. But the theme of the film is the relativity of reality in that you can do your damndest to do the right thing, and it may still end up horribly. There are things beyond our understanding and control."

Producers Henry Seggerman and Jack Murphy dropped-by to watch the show. Murphy was the guy who pitched McWhirter for the role. "Jillian is just an incredible actress," he blurted like a proud father. "For this movie, she had to exhibit an incredible range of emotions. We are all very

happy with her performance. The story is based on real life experiences people have had with alien abduction. The way the story evolves in these two characters aren't sure if they're imagining this stuff, and if one is grounded and the other is going off the deep end."

"What attracted me to this film," added Seggerman, "is that it calls into question the sanctity of the human body. The thought of having the sanctity of your body totally violated is truly terrifying. The film is a science fiction cum psychological drama, and is very suspenseful."

"With some horrific elements," Murphy supplemented.

Were the horror elements influenced by the boxoffice reverences of recent genre films, a la SCREAM and I KNOW WHAT YOU DID LAST SUMMER? "I tell people that it's not really a horror movie," Yuzna grimaced. "I've made horror and zombie movies. It's not a thriller because that connotes an 'erotic thriller' type of thing. It's an 'alien abduction' theme. We are doing it in such a psychological way that it's hard to call it sci-fi, and there is not much metal in it. Sci-fi has

Alien probe into McWhirter. "The thought of having the sanctity of your body totally violated is terrifying."



a lot of metal stuff. But we are watching the dailies [laughs], and we see poor Jillian laying there on this table, with her stomach opened up, while the good doctor is groping around trying to pull something out of it. I turned to the producer and said, 'I guess I should stop saying this isn't a horror movie.'

"But in answer to cashing in on the current wave? I would hope so. PROGENY doesn't fit that mold. The resurgence appears to be working with young actors in neo-slasher type pictures. This film doesn't have young actors. Jillian is young but not a teenager, and the other actors are not known to the young teenagers so I don't think it will tap into that success. But people will always want to be frightened and are interested in a well-told story. So I'm trying to make a scary film with emotion, and a certain amount of intelligence and vision, so ultimately it becomes a good story."

Murphy reaffirmed that "Horror has never left, but the stories have become tired and, consequently, the horror movie's popularity has dropped. PROGENY is interesting and, of course, a

"While McWhirter is just an incredible actress. She really had to exhibit an incredible range of emotions."



ANTHONY C. FERRANTE: F/X

**"With the emotional weight, she had to deal with a body cast & aliens attacking while she's naked. As f/x guys, nothing fazes us, but Jillian had us blushing with her cavalier attitude."**



A nurse tries to subdue McWhirter, whose hallucinations include a body table from outer space. The disorderly order is Brad Dourif (DUNE, SCORCH 55)

lot of TV shows have dealt with this stuff. But the difference is that we can go a lot further than TV, and tell a more intense story with scenes that could never be seen on TV—not because they're gory, but because they are intense, when Jillian is hallucinating in this house, then in the hospital and the table then envelops her to become this horrific creature that impregnates her."

I caught a glimpse of the supporting cast on a call sheet, in lieu of teenyboppers, the producers hired a couple of Academy Award nominees—Brad Dourif (ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST) and Lindsay Crouse (PLACES IN THE HEART)—in addition to veteran actor Wilford Brimley (THE THING, COCOON). It's likely this sort of sterling talent interpreted PROGENY as something more ambiguous than a "thing from outer space" saga. "I was fascinated with the idea of a foreign body growing inside of a woman during pregnancy," noted

the film's screenwriter, Aubrey Solomon. "I've always been interested in racial movies and how that affects people, because I'm interested in racism and xenophobia [fear of foreigners] and the fact that immigrants come into this country and people start to feel the pressure. You don't think about it too much, but it really bothers some people. Other cultures come into America and impose themselves upon you. This alien is imposing itself on this couple."

"Also, my second child was hard to conceive. The effort going into conception, and how my wife wanted to be pregnant, was reflected in the Sherry Burton character. This film is also about a couple having trouble conceiving, and then she's pregnant, but the husband isn't sure he's the father and gets uptight about it. What is the husband's right in a relationship to force his wife to have an abortion?—and what is the woman's right in all of this? We didn't want the husband to be a wife

betterer or abuser. But, essentially, it's about abortion and abortion rights."

Is a "battered woman" tract threaded into the movie? "The husband does to his wife is horrible," explained Yurns. "But if you see things through his eyes, you'll see that it's necessary. On the other hand, if you see things through another character's eyes, then the husband is a horrible psychotic who is destroying his life and the life around him."

Yurns's frequent partner, director/producer Stuart Gordon (FROM BEYOND, RE-ANIMATOR), served as executive producer and co-wrote the script. The director and the producers, almost in unison, concurred that "Stuart was a major inspiration to the direction that the movie is heading."

"Quiet", "Camera rolling", "Speed", "Action!" We watched McWhirter float around the set. The flashing lights and silence added a melancholic angst to the scene as she hypnotically crossed over from the warm bedroom to an extraterrestrial environment.

"Cat!" I had to act fast if I was going to speak with McWhirter before she was blasted through the window. She slipped on a dressing gown and we climbed the stairs to her dressing room. Appearing still slightly overwhelmed from her maiden flight, McWhirter flashed back to the embryonic stage of her career. The daughter of a former race car driver, she modeled in Texas before heading to New York for dramatic training. "Did you ever hear of SEVEN AND UP?" she inquired. "It's a cute documentary about interviews with these seven kids. Their childhood and maturity is traced by the filmmaker. Every child turned out to be what they say they wanted to do when they grew up. When you think about it, I always wanted to be a movie star. And I'm pursuing that."

"I have loved working

with Brian. He has done some crazy things. I saw RE-ANIMATOR years ago, and the film stays in my head. Brian is a quiet man and, well, he's from the South and I am from the South. We are all a bit crazy, you know. But I tell you, I have never slept with my cousin [laughs]."

Well, fry my grits. Are there a few good men in Hollywood?

"It's hard to find a good man. There are a lot of good people out here, nice interesting people. I need someone very creative, intelligent, someone who can... I need a man. I don't need a boy [laughs]. I was married to a boy, and don't need another one. We're divorced, we weren't right for each other. I always took it for granted that he would always be there."

After a pause, she perked up and recounted my earlier question—about identifying with a woman impregnated by an alien. "After I read the script several times, I started to imagine it. If I believe it, the audience will, too. I did a lot of research on what alien abductees have said. Anytime I feel like something is true, I become accessible to it. I put myself in their place and imagined the events. I even began waking up from some dreams really feeling like I was abducted. One time I woke up—it was so strange—I felt this excruciating pain, and felt like there was this alien finger pressing me on the stomach. You start to get into things. I mean, violation and rape breed terror. Thank God I haven't had anything like that happen to me. I have been exposed to it by people close to me, and I've seen their pain."

Her empathy shouldn't be underestimated. Mc-



A ferret and a Freudian spin on "alien invasion." McWhirter roars, "It's the first time I've done nudity. It's because in all the abduction I've read about, they take your clothes off!"

Whirter's involvement with the Bitter Truth Theatre, and subsequent production of a play, has raised funding for battered women. "It was all just fateful. I'd always been looking to do some charity work and decided if something came along, I'd just go with it. This lady named Lesley, who runs the theater group, saw me doing a stage reading of *Final Statement*, a piece I've loved for many years. I play this white trash woman who's baby is taken away because they think I've abused it.

But I come back to get the baby. And the church I go to raises money to build shelters for battered women and children. I thought they needed help. I don't know why I was triggered to it, it just came to me. I feel very passionate about it."

We eventually drifted back to the movie, and I asked her to validate why *PROGENY* is her "most challenging" role. "Well, I go from ecstatic, from finding out that I'm pregnant, to the point where I start freaking out and want to abort my

baby. So yeah, it's challenging, especially when I have to do the whole range within the same day. I had to relive the rape situation and I really crossed the line. I was really there and everyone came up to me to ask if I was okay."

Prior to the Yuzna movie, McWhirter appeared in *STRANGLAND*, another indie from Shooting Gallery Productions which released *SLING BLADE*. Her credits include featured roles in *WHERE SLEEPING DOGS LIE*, *LAST MAN STANDING*, *NOWHERE TO HIDE*, *SPY HARD*. Horror aficionados may recall McWhirter as the psychic in *AFTER MIDNIGHT*, an '88 anthology which co-starred *SPECIES*' Marg Helgenberger (7/25). Her earliest gig was a role in the *RYAN'S HOPE* soap, which she played opposite a debuting Christian Slater. McWhirter copped a Dramalogue Award, for Outstanding Performance, in *Crazy Nights*.

But how could she have prepared herself for the obligations of a Brana Yuzna movie? The filmmaker's product is routinely trademarked with surreal, sexual taboos. Disroachment is sometimes required.

"Yes, it's the first time I've done nudity," said McWhirter. "I'm pretty adamant about if the nudity is right for the story. In this case, it is because—in all the abductions I read about—the aliens take your clothes off. So my clothes are off and I'm making love to my husband. It was uncomfortable at first and I was scared, but once I'm down there doing it—and the acting takes over—it was okay. Being a gymnast for eight years taught me how to focus."

"Actually, the floating was most difficult. It was a lot of fun though. It was

hard because you really are halfway on this narrow plate, and you have to be pretty strong because there is no ridge and you are not tied down to it. You're kind of just balanced. We're doing more green screen and I am going to be floating higher, so I'm a bit more nervous about that. There will be a mat below me in case I fall, and they said I won't be too high—but you never know with these guys [laughs]."

Yuzna is very cognizant that McWhirter's dysfunctional role is risky business. "Many girls ran from this part because what happens to the character is terrible. She is abducted, raped, vivisectioned and then, on top of that, there is nudity. It's a traumatic experience the character goes through, and it takes actresses places they dare not go—and many actresses don't want to go there, but I don't blame them. You see, to do the part you have to live the part. Jillian was excellent."

"I respect Jillian more than to presume nudity is a big issue with her. I prefer stage people over movie people, especially the movie people who want to be celebrities more than actors—and that's the case with most of them; to them, nudity is an issue. To them, it is a commodity and I don't see it as that. I see it as realism, of course, we are trying to make it erotic but we are also trying to make it realistic based on the interviews of actual events. But if you put a negligee on the actress, then it becomes erotic—and the starkness of nudity becomes more appropriate. If an actress won't do nudity, I generally wonder how can they be emotionally nude—which is harder. Actors who do nudity all the time are great looking, and they don't have much to worry about. I respect the dumpy people who get naked. If I got naked, I would respect me because I don't look good naked [laughs]. But Jillian is gorgeous and I know it was a vulnerable thing for her to do, and I value the

#### JILLIAN McWHIRTER

**"I loved working with Brian [Yuzna]. I saw RE-ANIMATOR years ago, it stays in my head. We are from the South, all a bit crazy. But I tell you, I've never slept with my cousin [laughs]."**



McWhirter: "I did research on alien abductions. I put myself in their place & imagined the events. I woke up from some dreams, feeling I was abducted."

trust she puts on my act."

I passed Arnold Vosloo, the South African actor who plays McWhirter's spouse, in the hallway. He was in denial ("If there was other life on other planets, I'm sure it would've spoken to us a long time ago."). Elsewhere in the studio, special makeup effects supervisor Anthony C. Ferrante and his mogul Screaming Mad George were constructing crawling baby fetuses, roiling stomachs, a "torture chair," elusive "dark aliens," the works. McWhirter had to remain motionless, once again, she was literally plastered for a hasty cast.

"They had to cover my eyes and, at one point, had to stuff up one nostril," she explained. "Unfortunately, the one left open was already stuffed up. So we had to rig something up so I could breathe through my mouth, because you have this stuff on for about 30 minutes.

You have to stand there and you can't move. Some people really freaked out during the process."

"They also did a cast of my tummy—and a cute baby alien, which I thought about acquiring after the shoot but they said they'd make me a special one. And then there were the aliens. Yuzna! I saw what Screaming Mad George had done. It's like, 'Wow, you don't have to act, just look at this thing and it's scary.'"

Ferrante hired Roy Kyrren and Jerry Macaluso of Sots FX to create McWhirter's dream sequence: her character gives birth to something that crawls out of a sock and opens its eyes. An offshoot company, Sots Digital, managed by Roger Noll, rendered a design that drew upon Kyrren's baby. "They did this ultra-sound fetus thing," explained Ferrante. "Roy's wife was pregnant throughout the show, so he

used his wife's actual ultrasound and gave them to his digital art. They put it into their computer and modified it so you knew there was something strange going on."

Meanwhile, on the other side of Hollywood, Bart Mixon and Earl Ellis of ME-Effects are creating the disturbing illusion of Sherry aborting her baby. Ferrante describes the horrifying effect: "She was three months pregnant so it had to be small and threatening. They came up with this really damn creepy thing. When you looked at it, there wasn't a lot of blood on it and it was very disturbing the way they sculpted it. It had a tail and looked like a monster—but not like monsters from other films, it had a human look to it."

"They also built a stomach we operated on. I operated the tools for the incision close-ups. We were doing our own autopsy thing. I'd cut open the stomach, played around with the guts, then did shots like it was moving and squirming around. We went hog wild. We had a nurse telling us what we were doing wrong when we got overzealous."

Gauging the clinical and misrepresents travails of McWhirter's role, Ferrante conceded that "Jillian not only pulled off the emotional weight, but she had to deal with aliens attacking her while she's totally naked. She had to have this body cast, a fake stomach, give birth to this stuff and go through an abortion. And, through this whole thing, she was a trooper. As effects guys, we've seen everything and nothing fazes us—but Jillian had us blushing with her cavalier and nonchalant attitude about this."

"When we're trying to be polite about certain things, she'd just say it out straight and not pretend that this was Shakespeare. She'd even suggest things we wouldn't because it wouldn't have been polite, or there would be an uncomfortable position to ask an actress to



A kidnapped McWhirter (3) turns into an unlikely lesson for aliens (4). "It's a science fiction over psychological drama."

do. But she'd come up with it. An actress like that is rare and makes our job easier. You can't have a prima donna. She knew effects took time and, in the long run, would help her performance and make her look believable."

Privately, McWhirter acknowledged that she's a very religious person, she insists it was her theological convictions that mustered the strength to analyze and survive the role. There's the old adage that suggests "anything worth learning

can't be learned in a classroom." And Ms. McWhirter has supported its credibility. "At school, I was never keen on books," she shared. "I always excelled in creative classes. But as an actor, I get to play drug addicts, a reporter and other things. I get to experience many job opportunities that I couldn't have done if I had gone on and done a different thing."

"I'm a gypsy. The films are a part of me. You can pretend to be a doctor, a lawyer and to become the character forces you learn

about their trade. So I have learned many things that I wouldn't learn at a standard university. There's nothing wrong with a university, I went to SMU and studied journalism. But the point is that you have to do something that makes you happy. Even in film—when you are struggling and have these highs and lows—when you get a part, there's got to be something about it. But it's got to be in your blood, otherwise, life is too short. I mean this is difficult, you've got to want to do it." □



A woman is lying on her back on a large, patterned rug in a desert setting. She is wearing a dark, patterned top and has her legs bent. The background shows a vast, arid landscape under a clear sky.

# Justine's Daneen Boone

TWICE REJECTING PLAYBOY, THIS  
"LOLITA" OPTS FOR ACTING RISKS.

By GUY SCAPPERTO

It's the stuff an actor's dreams are made of. Just off the proverbial boat to Hollywood, Daneen Boone was immediately cast as the central character of seven feature-length films. Producer Alan Sirtzky had barely completed production of his EMMANUELLE series when he launched into another project, JUSTINE. The film series revolves around the daydreams of Justine, a young schoolgirl with a secret crush on Paul Robeson, a professor played by Timothy Dapri. She really gets around: one moment, Justine is sweating it out in an Egyptian

desert and, a couple of heartbeats later, she's a captive in an Inuit village somewhere in the frozen Arctic. Beside Justine and Robson, there are two other recurring characters. Kimberly Rowe (BLACK SCORPION II) plays school roommate Ursula, a promiscuous vixen who's the diametric opposite of the virginal Justine, and stern school mistress Madame Souvray, who tries to keep the girls on the straight and narrow—but isn't above a dalliance with Robeson or even Ursula—is played by voluptuous Jennifer Behr.

Boone was raised in Ontario, on the Canadian side of Niagara Falls. Debuting as a catalogue model in Toronto, Boone persuaded her father to drive with her to California.





Becca, a Canadian actress, portrays Josselyn in a TV series partially shot in O.C. "It's the first time I did nudity. The character is a little girl who has fantasies; I had them when I was 15. I shot the series when I was 18."



Jumping into her Jeep, Boone soon found herself sequestered in Hollywood. She promptly modeled for a Harley Davidson calendar and Venus Swim Wear advertisements. Agent Marv Daxer was engaged to manage Boone's movie career. "Actually, JUSTINE was my first acting job ever," she relates. "I was down by my pool in Brentwood and my manager called me and said, 'I have a great audition for you. You have to go on it.' I said, 'Marv, I'm down here by the pool. I have oil all over me. I'm wet.' He said, 'It's two minutes away, just go in and do a cold reading for them.' " Slipping a white sundress over her bikini, Boone hopped in her Jeep. "I didn't even know what the part was," she shrugs. "I didn't know it was about Justine, this sweet, little Lolita type of girl. When I walked in, they said, 'You're perfect!' Jay Whitworth, who cast JUSTINE, was there, along with writer-director Lev Shagiro and a couple of other people. By the time I got back to my apartment they called with an offer."

An acting novice, Boone had second thoughts upon her arrival at the studio. "I was in my dressing room and I kept thinking, 'I can't do this. I can't do this.' The first day, they started off slowly because they knew I hadn't done any acting work. So there wasn't even a lot of dialogue. I'm a pretty smart girl, but I just kept going over and over the lines thinking, 'I can't do this. I can't remember it.' I was just nervous. I thought I was going to throw up. But my dad drove me out here from Canada so I had to do it. And I did."

"This little girl, Justine, has all these fantasies. I had them when I was 15. All these crazy adventures in dreams. All that kind of romantic stuff."

The seven exotic films in the JUSTINE series—*Seduction of Innocence*, *In the Heat of Passion*, et al—have many nude scenes. "This

Boone as JUSTINE. "I like playing the young girl. I'm 24 but people say I look 18." She plays a Southern belle in the BUTTERSCOTCH series.

"An invisible man lusts after me. A memo showed me how to make love to an invisible man."

DANEEN BOONE

**"I was by my pool when my manager called about the audition. I said, 'I have oil all over me and I'm wet.' Walking in, I wore a sundress and I was still wet. They said, 'You're perfect!'"**



Boone's chaotic sexual is pursued by white slavers. "I asked my parents their opinion of JUSTINE. My mom never said 'No.' She just said, 'You're a big girl'."

was the first time that I ever did nudity," Boone admits. "I was really, really scared...very nervous. Luckily, I had a great manager. He had told me, 'You know once you sign this, there's no backing out.' My first nude scene was when my best friend Ursula and I were going into my room and, just like normal girls do, we changed. I was okay with it. They did it slowly throughout the movie, helping me get used to it. In general I don't like to do nudity, but, in JUSTINE, it was cute. She is a 16-year-old innocent girl who's falling in love with a 25-year-old professor. I thought it was interesting and sexy. Had Justine been a little older, I may not have wanted to do it. But because she was young and innocent...I liked that."

She attributes her renewed confidence to co-star Kimberly Rowe. "She has a lot of acting experience and helped me get through it, which is funny because I'm the lead. A very sweet girl."

Although the JUSTINE saga is variably set in scenic Asian and European locales, Boone traveled only once beyond the Hollywood border. "We went on location for a couple of days to New Orleans to shoot a scene in the *Private Affair* installment, where Justine is having this fantasy that she's the little blacker. It was fun, walking down Bourbon Street wearing long red boots and a shiny red mask."

Though she developed a screen presence, Boone was hardly accustomed to the filmmaking routines. "I think anybody can act," she insists, "but I wasn't familiar with any of the technical terms. The first day, the director said, 'Are you ready for blocking?' I didn't even know what blocking was. We started shooting in August and finished in November."

Not unlike Sirtaky's EM-MANUELLE compendium (3-9), softcore sex scenes were shot in 3-D. Justine almost loses her chastity, she's well-nigh ravaged by a

barney Sheik, nearly deflowered on an Incan altar and then close-to-being-molested in a white slave den. But, in the heat *Perils of Fandora* tradition, she's rescued and finally exempted from doing the dirty deed. "But I have a scene where I lose my virginity to the professor, though that's not until the very end—it's in the last episode, *Object of Desire*," says Boone. "We're prisoners of this criminal, Alan Pope, and we're trying to escape. He kisses me for the first time. That was odd because that was the first time I had kissed Timothy Dipri in the four months we were working together. He was kissing all these other girls except Justine—I waited four months."

Several directors were assigned the series, but Boone is partial to Kevin Alber, who helmed the *Exotic Locations* and *A Private Affair* adventures. "He was the best director because he was so down to earth—especially with the nudity. If he thought I was uncomfortable, he would stop and ask

people to leave and change it around to where I was comfortable."

The starlet just can't seem to shake her schoolgirl image. Upon wrapping JUSTINE, she was cast by director Hamilton Lewiston in *Butterscotch Sunday*, the fourth installment of Sirtaky's BUTTERSCOTCH series. "I went to a Catholic school in Canada, where I wore a uniform and gloves," sighs Boone. "I came to Hollywood to be an actress, and then they stuck me in a uniform. I play a Southern girl named Samantha Elders. I liked that role because she was a little more edgy than Justine. I wasn't as innocent, Samantha was a little wild. A bad invisible man kidnaps me, and I had sex scenes with him in the shower. Of course, I was actually in the shower by myself. Before we started shooting, they hired a lady who had studied mime. She came in there and worked with me and Kim Dawson, who played Madame Nirvana, and showed us how to make love to an invisible

man. It was a quick shot—with nudity you don't want to screw anything up—and we got it over with in about 20 minutes."

"Actually, I like playing the young girl. I'm 21 but people say I look 16. I think I was 18 when I filmed JUSTINE."

When her father's health declined, Boone returned to Canada and reevaluated her professional goals. Renewing her Green Card, she returned back to Los Angeles. "This time, I'm representing myself," she smiles, "—and it's great! Unless I can find someone who will work for me as hard as I'm working for myself, I might as well keep my money. I'm with the Max Modeling agency which helps to open doors. I just did a featured part in THE PARTY, a Columbia picture. I played the best friend of Jennifer Hewitt, the girl on PARTY OF FIVE. It was a small part, I only had six lines. But it was a stepping stone and I'm in several scenes. I thought that when you did a big picture for somebody like Columbia, it had got to be different. But you know what? It wasn't different at all. They were still fixing up the lighting while the actors were on the set. Actually, I think you get a little more attention when you're on an independent film. I just submitted myself from the *Drama Log* for a film called DETOUR. I got called back."

Realizing that she's in competition with thousands of other ingenues, Boone recites their litany: "This may sound crazy, but I want to have the lead in a feature film. I want to be able to go to the theatre and buy a ticket and watch myself. I don't mean that to sound vain, but it's my dream."

Between film and modeling assignments, Boone works in a small boutique located within a Southern California mall. "We have pretty little romantic sundresses, not too trendy," she grins from behind the counter.

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# Justine's Chanda

Take a close look at producer Alain Sirtzky's made-for-cable series—fantasy/sci-fi concoctions, some irradiated by trademark, erotic 3-D scenes—and you'll recognize some recurrent faces. This repertory company includes Chanda, who has appeared in no less than three of Sirtzky's sagas: EMANUELLE (5/9), JUSTINE and THE CLICK (6/9), the latter based on Milo Manara's comic strip about an electronically transmitted beam that's a sexual stimulant.

Born in San Diego, she was christened "Chanda" pretty much out of improvisation: "My mom thought I was going to be a boy, and she was going to call me Sean. Of course, I was born a girl so she just made it up. In Pakistani, or something, it means beautiful moon princess. I'm sure that's what she meant."

She moved to Los Angeles in pursuit of a singing career. It wasn't exactly love at first sight. As a matter of fact, Chanda hated her new environment. While working in nightclubs, the youthful singer auditioned for the none-too-talented role of a singer. "They asked me if I could act," she recalls. "Well, I kind of lied and said, 'For sure!' No problem! I had never even taken an acting class."

The producers decreed that Chanda was too young for the plum role, but perfect for a role ambiguously pegged as the "singer's best friend." Transported to the

## A STARLET'S SAFARI: CONCERTS, CABLE-TV AND 3-D.

By DAN SCAPPEROTTI



His manager to multimillion-dollar stardom, Chanda notes, "You have to find an agency who will push you not just for the sex thing, but for more quality stuff."

Philippines, the ingenue spent two months under a broiling sun shooting ANGEL OF DESTRUCTION ("So hot, she'll knock you out cold") for Roger Corman's Concorde company. The cast included B-movie bombshell Maria Ford (NAKED OBSESSION) and Charlie Spedding (MERIDIAN).

"They had originally cast another girl in Maria Ford's role," Chanda explains, "but nobody liked to work with her. She was so bad as a person—not as an actress—that even the makeup people didn't want to work with her. Nobody wanted to work with her. She was so mean to people that they actually sent her home and flew out Maria Ford."

The casting change prompted a revision of the script. Each day was marked by the players scrambling to learn new lines. Chanda portrayed Renee Jacobs, the lesbian lover of Delilah (Jessica Mark), a strip club's headline singer who's marked for murder. Ms. Ford played juicy Jo Alwood, a chop-socky avenger.

The tropical illnesses that besieged the American cast and crew were no problem for Chanda. "I had a great time," she shrugs, "because, before I went over there, I went to the doctor and had him give me antibiotics. So I was on medication before I ever got there. We had to go through the jungle, and see all these monkeys, and we saw how people lived over there. It was just amazing. It makes you realize how wonderful Los Angeles is!"

"Before I went there, I



"I love comedy because everything is so horrible in the world. The news is depressing. Comedy is better, it makes people smile & forget about bad things."

really hated L.A. I thought it was dirty, filthy and disgusting and I thought traffic sucked. I just really had a negative attitude about it. But traffic in the Philippines is the worst thing I've seen in my life. It makes L.A. traffic seem like a nice Sunday drive. It's so scary to get in a car there. And the air is so dirty. I really really like L.A. now. Sure, people drive like psychotic maniacs there, and there really aren't any traffic laws. But I never saw a single accident. It's like people are so aware that everyone is a moron, they're extra, extra aware of everything."

Charles Philip Moore, the film's director, wasn't

immune to the infectious symptoms: during production of *ANGEL OF DESTRUCTION* he "probably lost 50 pounds," relates Chanda, "and was hospitalized. So a few scenes were directed by Kevin Albert."

Chanda's acting debut left her feeling humiliated. She abandoned the profession for nine months and disciplined herself with dramatic training. The movie paid off: in less than two years, she has been cast in over 13 films including *PEST CONTROL*, *DARK SECRETS*, *POINT BLANK*, *87TH PRECINCT* and *MISCHIEVOUS*. But while Chanda's screen visibility expanded, her singing ca-

## CHANDA

**"I have a public access cable show. People call and ask my advice. But I don't give real advice because if people actually listened to me their lives would be completely messed up."**

reer was shortchanged: "I do dance music—like pop with a heavier beat. Somebody stole everything I had, including my songs. So I have to start from scratch. I'm looking for new songs now, because I had everything on masters and it costs a lot of money to do that stuff. When it all got stolen, I had nothing. I have to start all over again."

The rebounding Chanda was soon assigned her own television show on a public access cable station. "It's called *THE CHANDA SHOW*," she laughs. "I show music videos. Sometime I show my own music videos, that way I get my own airtime. I interview industry-type people. Sometimes it's live and people call and ask my advice. But I don't give real advice because, if people actually listened to me, their lives would be completely messed up. It's just meant to be fun and humorous. It's kind of mischievous because there's no delay on the calls, so, whatever they say is on the air. You never knew what people are going to say. But it's fun."

Last year, Chanda was invited to audition for a sensuous series called *EMMANUELLE*. Characters included a genie and aliens, and some of the decidedly "exotic" locales were literally out of this world. Unknown to the Chanda, her days in the Philippines proved reasonably profitable. Arriving on the set, she learned that the director—one Kevin Albert—recommended her to the casting office.

"I played this very shallow girl," says Chanda. "I was trying to seduce the lead actor, Paul Michael Robinson, who plays an extraterrestrial named Captain Haffron. Emmanuelle [Krista Allen, 5'7"] wanted to prove to him I only wanted him for his good looks, and that I was very shallow and egotistical. He turned himself into a very ugly person, so that I blew him off and I didn't care about him anymore. I was this litch, basically."

"The 3-D shot I saw them filming had feathers everywhere. It was really cool. My scene was supposed to be in Japan but it was actually

JUSTICE, one of three Alain Biskoby melbaes that drew upon her sex appeal. Chanda had already worked with director Kevin Albert in a Roger Corman film.



shot in L.A."

Chanda was subsequently cast as a spy in the farcical-erotic series, *JUSTINE*. "In every scene I was trying to trick these people. I thought I was fooling them by wearing these hideous disguises. But it's so ridiculous because it's quite obvious that my character is behind the camouflage. In one scene, I had to wear a giant turban on my head. I was a taxi driver, and I chew bubble gum really loud and talk in this annoying voice. Then I was a Russian person with a full-length Russian coat and hat. At one time I played a teacher."

"I'm attempting to steal something from *Justine's* teacher, so I convince him to let me tie him up, so I tie him up, gag him and leave him there. My name changed throughout the film. My name was Helga but it changed in every scene because I was in these disguises."

The character(s) appealed to Chanda because, "I love comedy, which I attribute to everything being so horrible in the world. You turn on the news and it's so depressing. I think comedy is better because it makes people smile and forget about bad things."

Cast in *LAP DANCING* (85) as a stripper/prostitute, Chanda was once again in the company of erotic thriller starlets, including Tami McClure, Kim Farris and Loris McComas. While she had already performed a sizzling burlesque routine in *ANCELS OF DESTRUCTION*, Chanda offered her first sampling of softcore sex. "As Irene, I was this really depressed hooker. It was funny because I'm just a naturally happy person. Realizing that, the director [Mike Sedran] wouldn't let me smile, nor have a great time between scenes, because he knows I had to go from one extreme to another. They're writing a *LAP DANCING II* right now, and I may be the central character."

Between numbers, her character turns tricks in an alley adjacent to the strip

#### CHANDA

**"I got posters of me, in lingerie, which I sell at my concerts and stuff. They're still in my car. People buy them from me...like the guys at the at the car wash if I happen to open my trunk."**



↑ Chanda in *JUSTINE*. "The 3-D scene I saw them filming had feathers everywhere. Really cool!" & In *CHAMBERLAIN*, which was also partially shot in 3-D.



club. Gyroting on stage, she disrobes in a bit of pageantry described as the Fireman Dance. "That was the nightmare day from hell. The day it was shot, we worked 31 hours. I was in the first scene and they kept pushing me to the very last scene."

"They had a couple of cameras on at the same time, and they'd have some

of us do it over and over again. I only did mine a couple of times. He'd have two or three cameras rolling in the dance and sex scenes. Sheila Thompson, a casting director, was great. She came in and helped a lot of the girls because most of us didn't have a clue as to what we were going to do. She helped a couple who were very nervous."

By the time the crew shifted into Chanda's musical clothes divestment, she was too tired to choreograph the dance. "I told them, 'Just say Action!' and I'll do it. I kind of winged it."

Her personal venue includes kickboxing classes. "And I like to travel. I like to do anything once, like sky diving. That's a real adrenaline rush. I don't want to do it too many times, because I wouldn't want to put the odds up on dying. But I figured a couple of times would be alright."

No wonder she has little patience for her vocation's rituals. Like auditions, for instance. "I hate auditions," she said. "I can't stand them and I basically suck at them. I think that every one of the parts I've gotten, I've gotten just from word of mouth—from someone who knew me or had seen me in something. I think it's because I really don't know what to do. If it says I'm supposed to pour a cup of coffee, I don't know if you're actually supposed to pour that cup of coffee and say something, or if you're supposed to just sit there and say something. It distracts me so much. I know I'm supposed to be above that but I'm still struggling with it—getting the joke. You should be good at that."

Although she eschews the prospects of becoming a model, Chanda has scrunched in that direction a couple of times. "I have a couple of posters out," she reveals. "I'm not striving to be a model. I like to eat too much. I'd never be one of those scrawny little things."

Between film roles, she's been engaged for endorsements, including an appearance to plug Comini Electronics, a distributor of electrical equipment. "They took a picture of me, in a bathing suit, holding a microphone next to their equipment," she says. "The poster said, 'I wouldn't play with anything else.' I also had a poster of me in lingerie which I sold at my concerts. I still carry them in

my car because I'm too lazy to carry them up to my apartment. Sometimes people buy them from me. Like the guys at the car wash if I happen to open my trunk.

"Once in a while, I'll get paid to do postcards. But it's not because I'm trying to get into modeling. It just happens. I was in a bathing suit for the post cards. It was one of those babes-on-the-beach things."

She had recently wrapped a minor role in *THE CLACK* when Chanda launched a scavenger hunt for a new agent. "You have to find one who will push you not just for the sex things, but for more quality, meaty stuff. you need someone who believes in you more than they do their other clients."

"I want to be extremely successful," she beams, "And happy And I want to be a legend...of course, I would never know that because I'd be dead." □

Chanda's credits include the Julie Sweeney-Monique Parent series, *DARK SECRETS*, which surfaces on the site were sealed in dramatic leather!



# Thanks for the Mammaries

JIM WYNORSKI, EMPEROR OF EXPLOITATION FILMS,  
ON HIS TWENTY YEARS OF DRIVE-IN DIVAS.

By JIM WYNORSKI



The place, a remote part of Argentina called Don Torquato. The time, the day after Chernobyl irradiated half the Soviet Union in '86. I'm sitting in the back of this dilapidated taxi cab with Monique Gabrielle, a B-Queen (SILK 2, CHAINED HEAT) who looks pretty great for seven in the morning. The driver doesn't speak a word of English and we're on our way to the first day's shooting of DEATHSTALKER II. We hadn't gotten a half-block from our hotel when a couple of grapefruit-sized tarantulas nonchalantly came crawling out from under the back seat. I let out a yell to rival any of yesterday's scream queens. Monique followed suit. The driver calmly hit the brakes in the middle of the street, grabbed an oily rag from the glove compartment and gallantly brushed them out of the vehicle.

I still remember the

Too hot for the MPAA? Julie Strain & Wynorski on the set of SORCERESS II, an unmissed sequel to the very profitable '80s erotic-horror saga. (Clockwise from top) Wynorski's WASP WOMAN pose in Syracuse, Oregon, setting of sex-R splashes produced during the 1990s







**"By 1 P.M., we'd found a scenic area. By 1:30, we were shooting our 'cavegirls' wading in the lake. By 3 P.M., we were all getting drunk at a hunting lodge."**

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"What have you gotten me into?" Jack Monique shot me as we sped to the set. I was mentally asking myself the same question.

Now, more than a decade and 50 films later, I'm still consistently queried about which specific behind-the-scenes incident—during my 20-year tenure in the business—qualifies as the funniest. Truth is, there are too many good ones to pick a favorite...and almost all of them revolve around the beautiful, talented actresses who've graced my pictures.

That spider incident was only the beginning of the fun on *DEATHSTALKER II*. Over the following six weeks, poor Monique had more than her fair share of troubles.

Tethered and suspended over a pot of "boiling oil," the dry ice stole Monique's oxygen and nearly knocked her unconscious.

Her horse refused to obey even the simplest command, whether it was articulated in English or Spanish.

The less-than-special special-effects men (aptly named Nicky & MoMo) nearly engulfed Monique in a ring of gasoline fire.

For a bantamweight, Monique sure was tough—not to mention adorable—in the role.

And speaking of adorable and spunky, you gotta love Kelli Maroney in *CHOP*.

Peggy Tourtel, an Swedish Bikini Teamer, notes, "Jim is the kind of director who, if something's not working, he'll just write something in that makes the scene work." Left: Antonia Dorian, also a *Wynona* vet, was featured in *SHOCKERS 4*, *DIM-SAMUR ISLAND* and *SORCERESS*.



PING MALL (1986) Fresh off of a sleeper, *NIGHT OF THE COMET*, this cute little bundle of energy was ready to tackle any action scene I could devise. Renting the Pacific Galleria for three weeks, we shot each night at that mall as soon as it closed to the public. In the course of filming, Kelli flew through plate glass windows, hung from precarious ledges and dodged heavy flying debris.

I had always claimed I would do anything first—just to prove a stunt was safe. And, believe it or not, I habitually and foolishly followed through on that guarantee...that is, until the night we had to cover Kelli with snakes, spiders and scorpions. My previous encounter with nightcrawlers, on the *DEATHSTALKER II* location made me jittery. Though I desperately wanted the shot, I refused to get near the serpents and vermin. Kelli piped-up, "Well, babe, if you ain't down it, then I ain't down it." Flanked by 50 actors and crew members, I was losing face. Who among them would award me the Coward of the Month plaque?

Determined to depose myself as Chicken a la King, I volunteered to show them unbridled machismo. Bring on the critters! First, the snakes were applied to my legs. Then tarantulas were dropped on my arms. But I started to freak when black scorpions were dumped on my leg. It drove Maroney into hysterics—she was laughing like a hyena. Me, I was sweating profusely and had a big shit-eating grin frozen on my face. "Enough, enough," I cried, "—hold the huge!" Thus, as a result of my uncompromising fear, you were denied a scene where Kelli Maroney was fondled by creepypants. Maybe next time.

For the record, the multi-faceted Ms. Maroney recently produced her own film for the Sundance Film Festival, and her acting legacy continues with *FACE DOWN*, a Showtime original. It's hell



Two of Wyroski's players, both cast in *THE LOST EMPIRE*, posed away passionately. T. Angelle Anzen (1955-1991), "A sexy comedienne & a terrific stud." & Angelique Pettyjohn (1943-1991), posing w/ Wyroski, was a drive-in film (*MAD DOCTOR OF BLOOD ISLAND*) and STAR TALK vet ("Greatest of Trailers").



(And the plugster is just warming-up.)

Speaking of hot, you gotta see the hedonistic babes in my latest picture, *THE PANDORA PROJECT*. In addition to ex-BAYWATCH bombshell Erika Eleniak, we cast a couple of drive-in divas: Nikki Fritz (*BEKINI DRIVE-IN*), Antonia Dorian (*VAMPIRELLA*), and newcomer Karen King. The

three play kept women occupying the villa of a notorious Cuban drug lord played by WELCOME BACK, KOTTER vet, Robert Hedges. (Hey, Nikki posed for another *Stocked & Packed*, G. Gordon Liddy's annual calendar: check [www.ashleyfratz.com](http://www.ashleyfratz.com).)

Antonia Dorian and me aren't exactly strangers. Becky LeBeau, an entrepre-

neurial bombshell who hosts and produces the *Soft Bodies* videos, introduced me to Antonia in '92. Back then, Fred Olen Ray and I were casting the femme leads for *DINOSAUR ISLAND*. I ended up directing most of Antonia's scenes, while Fred worked with his long-time friend Michelle Bauer. (For the record, we split duties with erotic thriller empress Griffen Drow, who was making her film debut.)

The highlight of that show came on the last day, when we took the camera, the girls and a few reflectors up to Big Bear Lake for exterior scenes in the water. We stuffed everyone and everything into a mammoth camping trailer, hired a driver, got an early start and proceeded to get incredibly lost. Imagine...stuck in the woods with all those curvy cavegirls. Oh, woe is me, right?

By one p.m., however, we'd found a suitable scenic area. By one-thirty, we were shooting. Then, by three o'clock, we were all getting seriously drunk at a local hunting lodge. For the life of me, the trap home is still shrouded in a friendly fog of machinety.

A lot of folks still ask me about *THE LOST EMPIRE* (1983), my maiden effort as a director. To tell the honest truth, I wasn't sure back then if it'd also be my last. Early on, I discovered the investors were there to lose money—not make it. And it's a serious downer to learn your film is not acknowledged as entertainment but as a tax shelter.

Undaunted, I still forged ahead and did my best. One of the film's stars, a Russ Meyer repertory player named Raven de la Croix, had a well-developed brain to go with that well-developed chest. Although we constantly argued over aesthetics (*translation: she wanted to do less nudity*), Raven's input on everything—from wardrobe and script to music—helped make the show a financial success in spite of the producers' intentions.

**"I discovered the investors wanted to lose money—not make it. It's a downer to learn your film is regarded as a tax shelter—not entertainment."**

Now blonde and still as ravishing as ever, Raven is still involved with show business. She maintains a web site ([www.webworks.pa.com/raven](http://www.webworks.pa.com/raven)), where you can check out SCREW-BALLS (our first film together) and other developments. If you happen to e-mail her, ask about the day we shot the scene with a 20-foot boa constrictor named Miss Piggy.

Melanie Vinco, who played Angel Wolfe in LOST EMPIRE, now resides in Orange County, California with her husband and children. I remember she was constantly worrying about her hair, which—go figure—always looked great.

Badly, Angela Aames (H.O.T.S., FAIRY TALES)—the kooky blonde of the threesome—died of heart failure in 1988. She was a sexy comedienne and a terrific soul. Her passing is proof positive that some memories turn bittersweet.

So you see, at least a half-dozen vignettes are compressed within a single movie flashback. Like the time on SORCERESS when Linda Blair heard me calling everyone on the set a "Rat bastard." She was mortified until she realized I was using it as a term of endearment (trust me, it's true). She and Edward Albert both picked up on it, and to this day, whenever Linda calls, she starts off by shouting, "Hey rat bastard—you there?"

Linda Blair in SORCERESS: "We shot those p-r shots in a cold garage for maximum goosebump action," says Wynanski. "Linda hated doing those pix, kept calling me a rat bastard."





**"Until realizing it was an endearment, Linda Blair was mortified I called everyone on the set a 'rat bastard.' She now starts her calls, 'Hi, rat bastard.'"**

Then came the three-way lesbian love scene between Julie Strain, Tom Naples and Rochelle Swanson. Crew members converged into a tiny set. (If you've seen the stateroom scene from *NIGHT AT THE OPERA*, you'll get my drift.) I mean, the male actors I let go for the day stuck around to moonlight as assistants or carpenters or whatever. I hardly ever get horny filming an erotic segment, but in this case I couldn't help but yield to the ole' muse. You could have heard a pin drop in that room when the scene got little fell swoing. I only used about a third of what I shot; the rest was just too damn scorching, and probably in direct violation of an *Horating* Cinemax/HBO shows the hot edition, but the cowards at the other prominent cable service—you know who you are—chose to cut the three-way. Such a pity.

*SORCERESS II*, which features a similar scene with Strain, Julie K. Smith and Jenna Baur, is still awaiting release from Concord/New Horizons. Write or wire producer Roger Corman today. Tell him, "I want my *SORCERESS II*."

I'll be back soon with more blasts from the past. Stay tuned for behind-the-scenes anecdotes with Traci Lords, Peggy Lipton, Gail Harris, Michelle Bauer and many more. Till then, happy viewing. □

Supporting player Marilyn Milke ("Was, did those big eyes," sighs *Whymost*)? Feeling? *Rocky Felt* is a kiss woman in *PARADISE FRISCO, FLA.*, a shoot-'em-up starring Ernie Hersek. "Jim is a genius," says Julie Strain. "He makes time that working men can have a beer & unwind with."



# VAMPIRE FEMMES

A FEMALE SCRIBE AND SEVEN ACTRESSES, ALL VAMPIRE VETS, DISCUSS THE MYTH'S MOVIE INCARNATIONS AND SEXUALITY.

BY LAURA SCHIFF

*Carmilla*, Sheridan Le Fanu's 1871 novella, translated to female blood parasite into a sympathetic predator Bram Stoker demoted the bloodthirsty brides of *Dracula* (1897) into a submissive seraglio. During the next century, vampires—embodied by the so-called



**BLONDE HEAVEN** Appearances notwithstanding, Julie Strain was cast as a "sleazebag vampire. The bigger than life and a vampire is a bigger-than-life role."

"weaker" sex—have hybridized an alluring blend of slick eroticism and unfettered feminine rage. Sample Harris Comics' *Vampirella* Damsel-in-distress? Hardly.

*FF* reporter Laura Schiff moderated a dialogue between seven actresses, all of whom portrayed a renascent breed of vamp: *Michelle Bauer* (4.2 & 5.10, *VAMPIRE VIXENS* FROM VENUS, RED LIPS, BEVERLY HILLS VAMP, THE TOMBO), *Barbara Leigh* (4.3 & 5.5, often the "cover girl" for Warren Publishing's *Vampirella* magazine), *Athena Massey* (4.7 & 5.7, *NOT OF THIS EARTH II*), *Tamé McClure* (5.3 & 6.4, *NIGHT SHADE*), *Julie Strain* (3.2 & 5.6, *BLONDE HEAVEN*, *LOVE BITES*), *Jennifer Huss* (5.6, *VAMPS*), and *Kelina* (1.2, 1.3, 4.4, 5.7, 6.7, aka *Cassandra Peterson*). The aforementioned thespians, in addition to author *Nancy Collins*—who's vampire novel, *Sunglasses After Dark*, earned a Bram Stoker award—offer their spin on the myth's modern incarnation and sexuality.

**Laura Schiff:** How are female vampires different from male vampires?

**Athena Massey:** Their genitalia.





Athens Hassy strikes a pose, as a literal vamp, for photographer Jan Dean. "The vampire's appeal is in the repulsiveness of it all happening at night, in the darkness...coming out when everyone's at their most vulnerable."



**Laura Schiff** That's not exactly the answer I was looking for!

**Athena Massey** I think that the difference between the two would be that the woman's ritual—her seduction of her victim—is likely to be more cat-like, more slow, more feline. But I still think the main difference is the genitalia!

**Michelle Bauer** I think male and female vampires are the same, ditto the victims—both sexes are powerless to the seduction.

**Elvira** True, vampires of both sexes are pretty similar. But I think it's unfortunate that the women in the genre are often depicted as the harem of the male vampire, you know? A lot of movies portray them that way, rather than the libertines they are.

**Toni McClure** If vampires were real, I think it would be pretty amazing for a woman to have that kind of power. Men are used to having physical power over women. It'd be really interesting for the woman to wield a vampire's sovereignty and have the physical strength—and her own sexual power—over a man.

**Nancy Collins** When I created the character of Sonja Blue in my novel, I wanted the fact that she's a woman to be beside the point. It's what has happened to her, as opposed to what gender she is. Her gender isn't an issue.

L. J. Dearie Gay, a modern vampire & animal predator in *VAMPIRE CONSPIRACY* by Michelle Bauer as a vampire B-chick in *BLOODSUCKER*



except as a subplot, because no one would expect her to be as strong or as ruthless or as psychotic as she actually is. I played against expectations of what a woman is supposed to be, and that's probably why both men and women have been able to identify with the character.

**Jude Strain:** I think male vampires are just aggressive and out to get the blood that they need. Female vampires are more sexy and sultry and alinky, and can use their feminine wiles to get into situations where they can keep their life going by sucking other people's blood. It's much more of a seduction than just an aggressive act.

**Barbara Leigh:** I think that female vampires would probably choose their victims more carefully. When a vampire bites, they don't only get the blood. They get all the life force, all the bad and the good that was within that victim. And I feel that a woman would be more discriminating—wanting to get the right kind of victim, someone who was more pure of heart. A lot of movies show vampires going after the derelicts or the murderers. But, if I were a vampire, I would want to go for the pure of heart, the healthy, all those things that I admire in a human being. Because I would want that to go into my being and, that way, it would empower me more.

**Jennifer Huss:** With the cultural views on male and female homosexuality, it would be more of a societal faux pas if a male bit another male. Therefore, women have the ability to bite a woman and it's more appealing to the culture because it's okay for two women to be that way. And women also seduce men. Men are only driven by the opposite sex. But, sexually speaking, women are able lure both sexes with audience approval. There's a lesbian undercurrent in all of the vampire films that are cranked out. Frankly, I'm quite sick of it. It's not about empathy; it's exploitation.

**Lauren Schiff:** Why do you think people love the vampire myth?

**"A vampire is pretty much the only sexy monster. Frankenstein and all those guys are cool but they're not that sexy. That's what vampires have going for them—and the mystery."**



Elvira (left): "It's unfortunate that women in the genre are often depicted as the homes of the male vampire, rather than the libertines they really are!" **Jennifer Huss:** gosh? "Playing the lead is a very faithful adaptation of *I Am Legend*."



**Michelle Bauer:** I've met a lot of people at conventions, and throughout my business, who really do believe that they are vampires. They dress up, and believe they have these powers. I think it's because of a sensation they get thinking they actually are as powerful over men and women. Matter of fact, somebody sent me this incredible book, *How to Get a Get a Date with a Vampire* [by Kiki Olson]. Men are known as vampires, amongst women, only because they suck and drain everything out of you. A man can be a vampire to financially or emotionally drain you. There are women who are the same way, who only want you for one thing. And they're so powerful that they can take over your whole life.

**Nancy Collins:** I see it as



an allegory of dependency and co-dependency, and the attractiveness of parasitic relationships in our culture. The vampire, if you want to strip it down to its essential Freudian underclothes, is basically a lover who takes everything and gives nothing positive back. It's like the moth that's attracted to dark flame. Basic, suburban American dysfunction is get-

ting yourself involved with people who are completely, emotionally dead. The vampire myth might be a reflection of that in our culture.

**Julie Strain:** I think what people really like about the vampire myth is that it's a fantasy. Males and females have fantasies, whether sexual or not, about other human beings or about being superhuman.

**Barbara Leigh:** Vampires are fiction so it's safe to allow yourself to be caught up in it. Vampires represent power and control, which is the one thing I never quite liked, because I don't like to give complete control to



**TANE McCLURE**

**“Men are used to having physical power over women, but it'd be interesting for the woman to wield a vampire's sovereignty and have the physical strength and sexual power over a man.”**



Barbara Leigh, 1924, reveals the Vampires' threads tailored for the censored *Nosferatu* movie ("I was heartbroken"); L: W/Vampire creator Fanny J. Ackerman

anything or anyone. But the myth is that you get under the spell and you have no choice. And then the sex taken over because of the control. It's a very sexual thing to me.

**Jennifer Huss:** I agree. There's always sexual psychology involved in a vampire movie.

**Elvira:** A vampire is pres-

ty much the only sexy monster. Frankenstein and all those guys are cool, but they're not that sexy. That's what vampires really have going for them. That and the mystery behind it. You know, not coming out during the day, sometimes leading double lives.

**Athena Massey:** I think people like the mysterious-

ness of it all happening at night, in the darkness—the eeriness of the vampires sleeping in their coffins, and coming out when everyone's at their most vulnerable.

**Tane McClure:** I concur with Elvira and Athena. It's the mystery. Somehow it's romantic—loving for eternity. And to make love to a vampire could cost you your

life.

**Athena Massey:** And, of course, there's the immortality.

**Julie Strain:** If any of us could, we'd all live forever. We'd stop aging at a certain age. Mine would be about right this second. If you're gonna do it, do it in your prime.

**Jennifer Huss:** To be honest, I'm rather sick of the myth and the clothes. I've been swamped in vampire stuff for a while. It's great, but I think there are so many other myths that qualify for exploration. Vampires now seem like a contrivance for a low budget or bankrupt imagination.

**Laura Schiff:** What did you like best about playing a vampire?

**Tane McClure:** The teeth! I did a film called *NIGHT SHADE*, about a hordelle where there's a lot of murders taking place. I played the head vampire—the most powerful and vicious one. It's fun, it's campy. I gave myself an accent. Not a classic British accent, but I figured anybody who's been around for a hundred years is not going to sound like she's from California.

**Elvira:** In my "Mistress of the Dark" persona, I'm able to act really wacky whenever I want to, without having to worry about any repercussions. It gives me a real freedom.

**Michelle Bauer:** The vampire movies I did were fun. *THE TOMB*, about a vampire named Nefritia, was a remake of an old movie. *NIGHTMARE SISTERS* was a blast—homely girls, magically transformed into drop-dead gorgeous escapees, conspire to waste boorish jocks. *BLONDE HEAVEN*, which I did with Julie [Strain], was more serious but had humor in there, too. It's been very educational: the makeup, the technology, learning about the original vintage vampire films. But I can't say it's like a part of my identity! I don't want to be typecast.

**Jennifer Huss:** I did one that was actually titled



Tara McGowan's gothic films include **NIGHT MADE**. "I played a vampire who works a hotel. It was described as a crossbreeding of **DRY OF THE DEAD** and **VAMPIRE CIRCUS**. The most appealing thing about vampire? Fangs!"

**VAMPS** It was shot on video and it's the first thing I ever did...you have to start somewhere. It was something of a dark comedy for the "B" crowd. My concept for a functional vampire movie would be a faithful adaptation of Richard Matheson's *I Am Legend*. Though the central character is written as a male, I'd love to play the part. A previous adaptation, *LAST MAN ON EARTH*, was an interesting failure. A later adaptation, *OMEGA MAN*, was a less noble failure. Charlton Heston vs. vampires. And now they're going to cast Arnold Schwarzenegger in a remake! Doesn't Hollywood get it? The thing that made the book scary was that it's here is intelligent but extremely vulnerable, putting these machine gun-wielding macho men in the role is anathema to the book's ten-

#### NANCY COLLINS

**"I see vampirism as an allegory of dependency...the attractiveness of parasitic relationships. In a Freudian sense, a vampire is a lover who takes everything and gives nothing positive back."**



**Tab:** Michelle Bauer, in *RED LIPS*, finds solace with southern belle Gheddy Craven ("I am I say a vampire is a part of my identity. I don't want to be hypocritical.") **L:** Nancy Collins, author *Her Sanguineous After Dark*, earned a Best Screen Award



sion and heart. Idiots!

**Barbara Leigh:** I was the first live model to ever portray *Vampirella*, and I was the first actress under contract to play her for Hammer Films in 1976. When I had the opportunity to play *Vampirella*—which, to me, was the greatest female vampire—I was ecstatic. It was like my dream came true. I also liked the fantasy

and romantic aspects of *Vampirella* coming from another planet [Drakulon]. The opportunity to play a vampire—wearing a sexy outfit, looking gorgeous, coming from another world—was exciting, wonderful.

**Athena Massey:** It's been reported that I played a vampire in *NOT OF THIS EARTH II*, but that's pretty ambiguous. I actually played an alien named Quadrina. I do drink blood in one scene. I also my victims' necks, hang them upside down, drain the blood into a bowl and drink. Unlike a traditional vampire, I don't have fangs and I'm not biting into jugulars; nevertheless, Quadrina has to have fresh blood or she'll die. So there's a definite parallel there.

**Julie Strain:** I like to play entities because I am bigger than life, and a vampire is a bigger-than-life type of role. My love interest in *BLONDE HEAVEN* was actually a girl. The guy in my character's previous life had died and is reincarnated as a girl. So I was a lesbian vampire. Playing a vampire is the closest you can get to being a real vampire—you can put all your fantasies, which you've had your entire life, into this one role. Get into it.

**Nancy Collins:** Most people are surprised that I don't like vampires. They're monsters, I'm sorry. Writing the monsters themselves doesn't disturb me. I tend to be more disturbed by people who really get into some aspects of my writing without thinking it through—like those people who want to be vampires. It tends to make you wonder what's going on in our society when the people reading the books identify more with the monsters than with the vampire slayers. I've had so many people come up to me and say, "if I was a vampire, I'd be a good vampire. I'd only kill people who deserve it." And that makes me say, "Well, that's nice. I've got to leave now!" □



Alison Mossey, posing for Peter Martin, notes the difference between *sexus* is "a female vampire's ritual of seduction is more feline." Mossey has been cast as "Harm-see," a immortal "bed girl" on the sci-fi TV series, **BLACK SCORPION**.



7 Katie Holmes, 18, as a teen rebel Rachel Wagner: "I do think this film will raise a lot of questions about parental control." 8 KATIES alarmist—director David Nutter (5) and makeup fix artist Toby Lindholm—supervise Bruce Kirby.

# KATIE HOLMES DISTURBING BEHAVIOR

THE "DAWSON'S CREEK" STAR  
IN A HORROR PIC THAT INSISTS  
"THE KIDS ARE NOT ALRIGHT."

BY FRANK GARCIA



Screenwriter/co-producer Scott Rosenberg succinctly describes *DISTURBING BEHAVIOR*, his latest film, as "THE STEPPFORD WIVES meets INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS—with a twist. It's about Steve, a kid who moves to a new town and soon comes to realize that all the bad kids in high school are being turned into good kids. He's a good, regular kid, but, as he starts to investigate further, he gets into trouble and becomes open to the procedure himself." After a pause, he slips in the film's inherent philosophy: "You can't get perfect kids from a chap. You want to raise good kids. You have to start with yourself."

James Maraden, 24, is cast as Steve Clark, the newcomer who befriends Gavin Struck (Nick Stahl), and Rachel Wagner (*DAWSON CREEK*'s Katie Holmes, 18), two of the town's rebellious holdovers. Steve soon realizes that Cradle Bay is a community of human guinea pigs who are manipulated by a sinister Doctor Caldicott (Bruce Greenwood).

A supporting cast of red

herringbones include veteran actors Steve Raskin (*LIFE FORCE*, *BARB WIRE*) as the sheriff and William Sadler (*DEMON KNIGHT*) as a seemingly retarded high school junior.

"I thought it was a cool premise!" exclaims Maraden. "The horror movie is back in style, and people just go to be scared. The studios are paying big money to make a B-movie, but they do it very well and they make money."

Ms. Holmes gauges *DIS-*



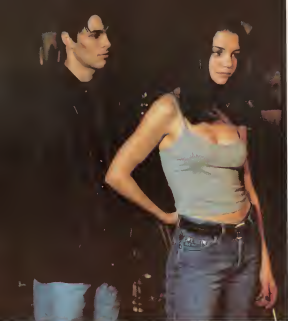


T James Maradan and Holmes reat the "Conversion." B. The couple escape in an homage to *WILSON OF THE BODY SNATCHERS* (1966 version).

**TURBING BEHAVIOR** as "very interesting. There's this whole string of horror movies being written now, as a result of Kevin Williamson being so successful with *SCREAM* and *SCREAM 2*. I've been reading a lot of horror scripts and I really like the stuff. Horror comes from reality. This is not a slashier film, it's a little far-fetched—but we're making it very believable and interesting."

Rosenberg reciprocates with no-so-faint praise for Holmes: "Kate is amazing!" he gushes. "I can't say enough about her! She plays the girl from the other side





of the tracks. Steve becomes romantically involved with her. She's best friends with this other kid, Gavin, who changed."

Although the film is grounded in reality, Rosenberg doesn't deny a plot development that's marginally sci-fi-driven: "They are getting in and messing with these kids' brains to turn them into A-grade students and all-star athletes. But the problem is that, every now and then, the kids are given up to these random acts of unbelievable, homicidal violence. That's sort of the glitch they haven't figured out."

"The movie opens with the star quarterback in school necking with a girl on the bluff. And the police come to basically say, 'You can't be on the bluff because it's past curfew.' And this kid—this A-student quarterback—goes crazy: he strangles the girl, shoots the cop and completely melts down. And, two seconds later, he's back to normal."

To establish a deceptively provincial environment, occasionally betrayed by the diabolical milieu from within, producers Jon Shestack (AIR FORCE ONE) and Arnyan Bernstein (THE COMMITMENTS) turned to veteran television director David Nutter, who launched three genre-related TV pilots: SLEEPWALKERS, SPACE ABOVE AND BEYOND and MILLENNIUM. Making his maiden effort as a movie director, Nutter notes, "DISTURBING BEHAVIOR is a film that's more than just fright wigs. It stays with you after and it has impact. A lot of films these days are pretty much popcorn and bubblegum—but this is a way that I can affect people."

Rosenberg's script appealed to Nutter because "There aren't very many films today concerning parents... that's a rich bedrock."

F: James Marsden ("I thought it was a cool premise") & Holmes ("This whole string of horror movies is a result of Kevin Williams' success").  
E: The club are checked in by Internet.



I really feel that the teenagers today are the aliens among us. We talk about movies with aliens—sometimes the teenagers are just like that. We walk [like city streets] and see these kids and say to ourselves, 'What happened to that kid? Why are they the way they are?'

"It's a classic horror movie I read *I Know What You Did Last Summer* before it was made, and I was offered it while I was in the middle of doing an *X-FILES*. I felt, 'How can I do something that makes fun of the genre when I'm in the middle of *THE X-FILES*, which is more grounded in reality?' When I read [Rosenberg's screenplay] I thought it would be something more than just making a scary movie. It's a lot smarter, and could affect people who watch it and see themselves in it.

Conscripting no less than seven pals from his *X-FILES* tenure, Nutter adhered to the movie's restrictive budget and schedule. "I was able to bring in people who I've worked with—director of photography John Bartley, the camera operator, the gaffer, the dolly grip, the casting woman..." in addition to Toby Lindale, the special makeup effects artist, and composer Mark Snow.

Not unlike *A CLOCKWORK ORANGE*, Rosenberg's story offers a morally questionable solution—embodied by Dr. Caldicott—teen felony. "If you look at what's going on in the past couple of years—kids going with guns into high schools and shooting people, killing the pizza man just because they wanted to see what it felt like—it's crazy!" exclaims Rosenberg. "Sixteen-year-old girls giving birth to babies and killing them. Obviously, there's something wrong. I think a lot of people, particularly parents, say, 'God, if we could just put a chip in their head and make them good! Yeah! Go for it!'

"Sure, the converted kids in our movie get straight A's,

**"I've been reading a lot of horror scripts, and I really like the stuff," says Holmes. "Horror comes from reality. This isn't a slasher film: It questions societal standards."**



T. Holmes, w/ Menden, notes "The [film] is a little too-futuristic, but we're making it very believable." B. The cast convulses at Lisa Ribicoff Fordstock. Holmes, Menden ("Steve"), Chad S. Donelle ("U2") and Katherine Isabelle ("Lindsay").



win the sports games and are polite, but, at the same time, they're unbelievably cold and lacking in any kind of sensitivity. They're almost like Nazi youth. "It's not brainwashing. It's more so-f-it than that. It's literally opening up the brain and removing pieces and planting other pieces."

Holmes is confident that

**DISTURBING BEHAVIOR** "will raise a lot of questions about parental control and societal standards, and how they're affecting teens. Maybe it will help and motivate teens to establish their own ideas, encourage them not to do drugs—but also not to have them feel too much pressure. I think there's a lot of repression that goes

on in teen years."

Although the movie is primarily a character drama, a few scenes required special effects cosmetics; hence, Nutter leaned on ally Lindale and his team of effects wizards. The gang already cut their teeth on the likes of *MILLENNIUM* and *THE X-FILES*.

The design of a surreal dream sequence, conceptualized in one of the script's earlier drafts, almost prompted Nutter to shap for an accomplice. The scene, which was finally jettisoned from the screenplay, involved Gavin Strick and friend Robbie inhaling marijuana. The intoxicated Gavin nearly loses his lunch when Robbie peels some skin from his scalp to reveal a third eyeball.

"It's 'the paranoid eye from the back of your head.' The Big Brother thing!" laughs Lindale. "The scene" was vague in the script, and David Nutter talked about some new concepts making it very relevant.

"I was trained by [makeup effects expert] Dick Smith and I love that school of thought—recreating reality. I hope people won't think a lot of the stuff we've done in the picture as makeup effects. I hope the effects will help tell the story, and people will think of what it represents in reality, as opposed to 'Wowow! What a cool makeup effect!'"

Lindale notes that filmmakers are occasionally too enamored by a special effect's aptitude to steal a scene. "There seems to be a tendency to fall back on using some extreme, in-your-face extravaganzas effects," he says. "That overshadows what the story is about, which seems crazy to me because I always thought the idea is to tell a story. It's always a pleasure to be part of enhancing that, and not be distracted by the concept of 'Oh, wow! How much did they spend on that scene?'" We just want our part in helping tell a story. That's what is sometimes just ignored in filmmaking." □



**IT never works:** Marion Kelly (left) has turned strapless; she's out her calendar, model kit and two tits.

## FATALE ATTRACTIONS

continued from page 8  
director best known for *THE PASSION OF JOAN OF ARC* (38) and *DAY OF WINTER* (43), crafted *WMPYR* as a mythic quest, exploring the theme of death in a very experimental film. The grainy black and white images, heavily shadowed, created an aura of doom and despair, thanks to art director Hermann Warm (*THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI*). Sadly, Hallenbeck's remake—shot for \$60,000—fails to capture the original's suspense or foreboding of Croyer's blow-progressive. Hallenbeck's is the only vampire movie I've ever seen that is shot almost entirely in broad daylight—it just doesn't feel a milieu building a vampire

tale. The mysterious "shadow people" of the original were replaced with non-union actors in quasi-vampire makeup who simply do not have the talent to pull this off. Most troubling of all is the recasting of Marguerite, the vampire responsible for terrorizing the small town. In the original, she was played with chilling intensity by Mercedes Davies—already an old woman at the time the film was made. In the remake, the venerable actress was replaced by Cathy Saylor, a docu young film who spends the whole movie running around in a silly vampire cape and not much else. Randy Scott Rader, who plays the leading man, is the sole stand-out talent, and I certainly wish him the best of luck in his future endeavors. Hallenbeck earns my respect for trying to update the classic, but as much as I wanted to, I couldn't sink my teeth into *WMPYR*.

■ **Manon Kelly** (4, 7), Future's curvaceous model for Vampire comic books, is releasing "Short & Sweet"—a 1999 pin-up calendar—sometime in August. Manon poses in four photos that depict each of the seasons: a metallic cyber-inspired suit for winter, lingerie for spring, a '50s style bathing suit for summer and animal prints for fall. Price is approx. \$15. Jump into [www.greex.com/madcen/links/1.h.html](http://www.greex.com/madcen/links/1.h.html) to order.

■ **Award-winning sci-fi novelist Brad Linaweaver** has been commissioned by TV Books, a division of Harper Collins, to write *SLIDERS: Parallel Universes*, an episode guide of the TV series. "The guide ties in with the television show being reborn," explains Linaweaver. "When the show left Fox, it was picked up by the Sci-Fi Channel. They decided they would reinvent some of the most popular episodes from the Fox period, and then start new episodes in June. Originally, there were four people in *SLIDERS*: John Rhys-Davies, Cleavant Derricks, Sabrina Lloyd and Jerry O'Connell. I interviewed all four of them for the book. Now

**Bruce G. Hallenbeck's WMPYR** earned serious respect from Vampire Film writers **Adam Silver** & **James Ussis** ("Dissemble.")



The original *SLIDERS* only: Jerry O'Connell, Sabrina Lloyd, John Rhys-Davies, Cleavant Derricks. "Lloyd was wonderful. It's a grave error she's off the show."

only two of the original four remain. John Rhys-Davies was replaced by Kari Wuhrer, and Sabrina Lloyd was replaced by Jerry O'Connell's brother, Charles O'Connell. My book doesn't deal with anything beyond the original four cast members. It doesn't deal with any of the Kari Wuhrer episodes." Adds Linaweaver, "Sabrina Lloyd was wonderful, and I think it's a grave error that she's off the show. I'm not sure why she was replaced, but I think it's a real tragedy." The prolific author had previously written seven novels, including *SLIDERS: The Novel* (Berkley Boulevard), based on

the series' pilot episode. "It's about a Soviet-occupied America," says Linaweaver. "It's kind of a Joe McCarthy nightmare, which started off this series. The *Sliders* end up in an America that's been taken over by the Soviet Union. Whenever you do a novel based on a script, you've got to add material, so I invented some new characters and added some sex scenes that did not appear in the pilot. I also put lots of politics in it as well. Not only did the show's creator, Tracy Torms, live all my new stuff, but he suggested that I put more of my own take into the novel." *SLIDERS: Parallel Universes* will be available in June. □

**DIANA RIGG** continued from page 18  
as hostess of PBS' MYSTERY) serve she prefaces each show with an introduction to Kumpale of the Bailey or Sherlock Holmes. "Deep down I have an irreverent spirit," explains Rigg. "People who take themselves deeply seriously are really good at tragedy, and I don't take myself that seriously. I could have gone on and done greater and greater things...but I didn't. It's as simple as that."

Her sentiments regarding THE AVENGERS don't exactly strike one as nostalgic. Rigg remains friendly with Patrick MacNee, but, exempting some screenings shared with her daughter, she rarely watches the show. "When I got touchy, it's at the suggestion that THE AVENGERS was the sum of my professional career."

The actress, who recently turned 69, is "not sure that I like the thought of decline. I've got to come to terms with that, with bodily decline. I'm not at all sure in what way to go forward into the next part of my life."

Her mantle must be pretty cluttered, with a profusion of honorary degrees (Strirling & Leeds Universities), an Olivier nomination (1998, *Mother Goose*) and the London Evening Standard Drama Award. Somehow, she found the time to edit a couple of books (*Go to the Land and No Turn Un-*

stayed: *The Worst Best Theatrical Reviews*). Last year, Dame Diana Rigg's performance as "Mrs. Danvers," in Pertinax Productions' REBECCA, earned her an Emmy award ("Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Miniseries or a Special"). But her gratitude was eclipsed by indignation: "The real difficulty is finding vehicles for the ladies. There aren't very many new parts for us. I don't know why I think we're fascinating creatures." She hasn't changed a bit. □

## DANEEN BOONE

continued from page 30

Spotting Boone's photo in *Female Fatales* 68, a producer asked the editor about her career. "As a result, I may be working on a science fiction film later this month," she nods. "Because it has some nudity in it, and I'm representing myself, I have to have everything checked by a lawyer. You have to be very, very careful." But Boone isn't leashing on nudity as a professional catalyst. She recently turned down an offer to pose for Playboy. "I turned them down twice, already," says Boone. "The first time they asked me, I was only 17 years old. I was in a Venus Swim Wear competition in Florida and I just wasn't ready. When they later saw my picture in *Variety*, they called my manager but I didn't want to do it. It's a lot of money. But it's not acting." □

Diana Rigg as "Miss Winters," investigates THE ASSASSINATOR BUREAU (Directed by Basil Dearden [DEAD OF NIGHT], the 1970 movie was nominated for a Golden Globe [Best English Language Foreign Film]).



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## LETTERS

## HEALTHY

I picked up the latest issue of your magazine (6/12) because Chase Masterson is a friend and I wanted to read her story. I had to write and put you folks on the back on a number of levels. First of all, kudos to your writer for including Chase's thoughts on religion and spirituality. So many publications are afraid to depart from the "secular," so I was impressed that you folks printed all that she had to say.

The other thing that impressed me even more was your departure from the anorexic standard of the day by depicting normal-looking women in your magazine. I am so tired of picking up publications that depict, as attractive, women who are mere skin and bones. They set a bad example for the eating-disorder-ravaged younger women in our society, and send the wrong messages to the other media in terms of what it is they think they should be showing. Bravo to you for showing healthy-looking women! You are making an important contribution to our popular culture by doing

Gayle S. Stever, Ph.D.  
Developmental Psychologist  
Scottsdale, AZ

## INDEPENDENT'S DAZE

Many of us were looking forward to more news about projected "new" WONDER WOMAN series: Warner Bros. DC comics received myriads of free publicity worldwide with the ongoing "search" for the new Wonder Woman.

But this morning, at 10 a.m. on the WH network stations here in Hollywood, it was announced the casting director can't find "Ain't no Wonderful Woman." This casting issue is a no-brainer for *Femme Fatales* and *Femforce* readers who've seen Rochelle Swanson ("Sheila Shane" on *Showtime's SHERMAN OAKS*) in the pages of both periodicals. She's perfectly qualified to play the superheist. Ditto the beautiful and powerful Julie Strain, who landed in *English* magazine. She's also ready to play the doctor and Nancy Greenglass. All three actresses could aptly fill out a *Wonder Woman* costume. Hollywood, however, doesn't

want audiences to see women as "abundant" as Geena, Strain or Swanson. They want to keep pushing the anorexia at the viewer. The only reason we got to see Patricia Anderson on television is because **RAYWATCH** is not produced by a Major Studio. Would Brigitte Bardot, Virginia Lam or Jayne Mansfield have roles in Major Studio Productions today? We think NOT.

There are certain films the Major Studios want to shut you out of. Among the exclusions are the proposed **FEMFORCE** and **DAWN HUNTER** movies adapted from my company's comic books. I have been questioned about these last two titles ad infinitum, and am then forced to explain why the films have not been made.

For the most part, the Major Stadiums today are owned and controlled by multi-national corporations. They dictate not what you want to see but what they want you to see. Have you noticed how few TV commercials promoted BARR WIRE and ALIENS RESURRECTION, both of which suffered the consequences at the boxoffice? But, in contrast, look at the surfeit of media coverage and commercials tailored for TITANIC and the failed POSTMAN.

These same multi-national corporations and its stars, who draw millions of dollars per picture, are major supporters of Bill Clinton and the Democratic Party who, in turn, placed Janet Reno as head of the Department of Justice. And we've seen the laws fly off the pages of our Constitution. These are the laws that were once created to insure the survival of small businesses.

Our nation was founded and nourished by independent businesses. Back in the '70s and '80s, corporations started gobbling up the studios. In today's entertainment industry, all play the incest game by purchasing each other's shows and eliminating the independent producers. American taxpayers continue to be cheated as giant corporations use tax



Chase Winkler (R-12), DEEP SPACE NOW's "Lerts," personifies a natural beauty and spiritual quest uncommon in the media.

budget bombs as write-offs  
against corporate taxes.

My respect goes to Miramax and Roger Corman's Concord/New Horizons unit because they continue to bring good entertainment to the screen for fractions of the budgets of Major Studio films.

Mike Frankovich  
The Film Company  
Glendale, CA

## SOMEONE'S RESPONSIBLE

Correction: True, that's Robert Picardo as Dr. Zimmerman in your 6.12/Chase Masterson centerfold. But his (normal) character on VOYAGER is one of the "EMH's" (Emergency Medical Holograms) that Zimmerman developed.

Don Schick  
Allentown, PA

## WENDY O. RLP

I picked up my local paper on the morning of April 8th and was saddened to read that actress/singer Wendy O. Williams [REFORM SCHOOL GIRLS] passed away. As an avid reader of *FF*, I'm enclosing a photograph of her obit.

Wengy & Williams, three-stage theatrics as lead singer of the punk band The Flamin' Armos included blowing up equipment and chain-sawing guitars, has committed suicide. At 48, she died of a self-inflicted

gunshot wound. Williams, dubbed the "queen of shock rock," was nominated for a Grammy as Best Female Rock singer during the height of the band's popularity more than a decade ago.

Keep up the great work. Your sister magazine, *Cinefantastique*, is also an excellent publication.

Mark Cunliffe  
Litchfield, CT

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